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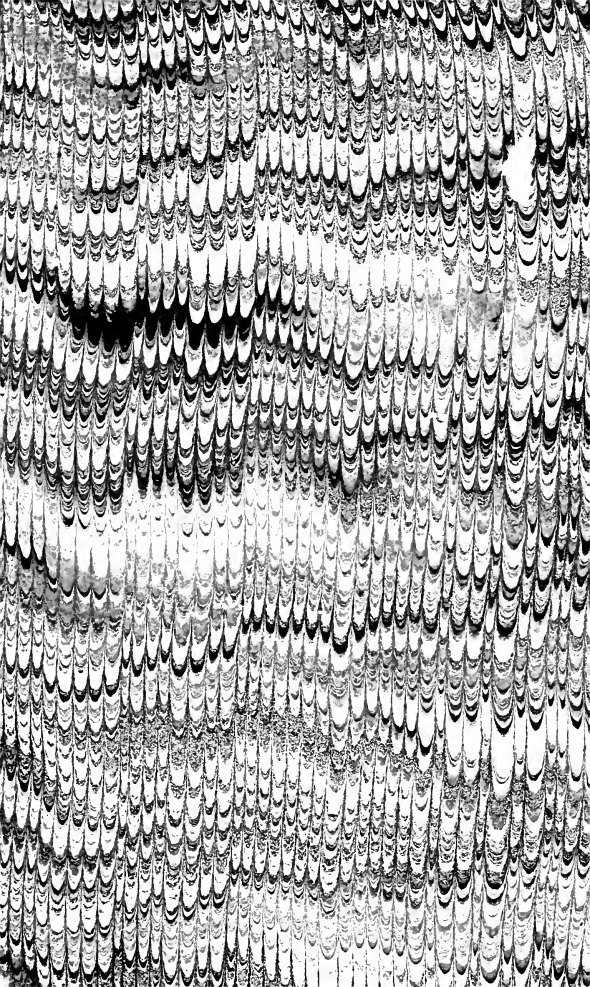


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HISTORICAL
P A R A L L E L S.

IN THREE VOLUMES

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HISTORICAL PARALLELS.

INTRODUCTION.

WORKS of history may be divided into two great classes : those which select a single action or a detached period for their subject ; and those which follow a nation through the whole or a large portion of its existence ; and which, embracing a number of such subjects, compensate for giving less minute and accurate information upon each, by explaining their relation, and the influence which they have exerted upon each other. To the former belong Thucydides, Xenophon, and Cæsar ; to the latter Diodorus and Livy : or, in English literature, we may take Clarendon and Hume respectively as the representatives of these divisions. It is obvious that the method of treating themes so different in character, must also be essentially different ; that for an historian of the latter class to aim at the particularity which we expect in the former, would involve something of the same absurdity as if a landscape painter were to give to an extended horizon the distinctness and detail which are proper to his foregrounds or to a closely bounded scene. If our curiosity is not satisfied by a comprehensive view, the remedy is to be found by multiplying pictures of its most striking parts, not by introducing into one canvas a multitude of objects which must fatigue and confuse the mind, and obscure those leading features which ought to stand out in prominent relief. Any one who wished to become acquainted with the nature and characteristics of a country, which he could not survey personally,

would neither confine his inspection to bird's-eye and panoramic views, nor content himself with a series of detached paintings, though representing separately whatever was most worthy of observation : in the one case his ideas, though perhaps correct, would necessarily be slight and superficial ; in the other, his knowledge of the parts would never enable him to form an accurate judgment of the whole.

Valuable, therefore, as is the assistance of those authors who have devoted their talents and learning to epitomizing and rendering accessible the story of past ages, it is far from desirable that we should content ourselves with a blind trust in them, without checking their assertions, and filling up their sketches by a more detailed knowledge than it is possible for them to communicate. To apply these observations to the present work, the History of Greece contained in the Library of Useful Knowledge necessarily gives a very short account of many things which deserve to be known in detail, both on account of their historical notoriety and for the intrinsic value which they possess as striking examples of human power, passion, and suffering. Much of the excessive commendation which has been bestowed upon ancient virtue and patriotism ought probably to be attributed to the eager interest naturally excited by the revival of learning and the peculiar circumstances under which it took place. The discovery of the works of the most celebrated writers of antiquity, whose names at least had not been forgotten, must at any time have produced much curiosity and excitement : and peculiarly so when modern literature did not yet possess many names to divide the palm of genius with them. Besides this the political circumstances of the Italian states, in which the new discoveries were at first most successfully and generally prosecuted, would give an additional interest and a peculiar bias to the study of ancient literature ; for their inhabitants would naturally be disposed, as Italians, to exult in the glories of ancient Italy, and as republicans to look for patterns both of polity and of conduct among the famous republics of Greece and Rome.

A contrary cause, in a later age, and in countries subject to arbitrary power, would probably conduce to the continuance of the same feeling, when the prevalent subjection of public opinion made it safer to enforce sentiments of freedom and patriotism under the mask of an overstrained admiration for actions, frequently of very questionable character, done in times long past, than openly to profess the love of republican simplicity and liberty, which was willingly left to be inferred. The usual course of education long tended, and in an inferior degree perhaps still tends, to cherish the same indiscriminate enthusiasm. The first histories put into the hands of children are usually those of Greece and Rome, taken not from the sober and comparatively unprejudiced relations of the earliest authorities, but from Plutarch, and other compilers of a later age, who, living themselves under despotic power, and compelled to veil their philosophical aspirations after a better state of polity and morals under extravagant praises of a by-gone period of imaginary virtue and disinterestedness, were for the most part ready to warp truth into correspondence with their own views. In such works actions are held up to admiration because they are brilliant, without much inquiry whether they were justifiable; wanton and unjust aggressions, and other crimes of still deeper dye, are glossed over upon some false plea of patriotism; or their moral quality is never alluded to, and the young reader is too much captivated by the splendour of bravery and talent, to remember that the ends to which these gifts are directed should never be forgotten in estimating their claim to applause.* But whatever be our opinion

* A striking instance of this occurs in Justin. Speaking of Harmodius and Aristogiton (see chap. v.), he says, "One of the murderers, being put to the torture to extract the names of his accomplices, enumerated all the nearest friends of Hippias. These were all put to death, and being asked whether any others were privy to his designs, he answered, that now none remained whom he wished to perish, except the tyrant himself. The city, admonished by his virtue, expelled Hippias."—Lib. ii. 9. The *virtue* of this act con-

touching Grecian and Roman virtue, or the moral character of the most celebrated portions of their history, these have obtained a degree of currency and notoriety which render familiar acquaintance with them almost necessary for the full understanding of much even of modern literature. The object of this work is to supply, in part, these details from the original historians, and to compare or contrast them with other remarkable incidents of ancient or modern times; in hope of forming a collection of narratives of some interest to those who are not largely read in history. And even those who are in some degree familiar with the subjects here treated, but whose knowledge is chiefly drawn from compilations of modern date, may be gratified by the variety in style, feelings, and opinions observable in a collection of extracts from authors of various dates and nations.

We have selected from the Grecian History, in chronological order, as furnishing the readiest principle of arrangement, a series of occurrences of which some have obtained remarkable notoriety; some, being less known, are either striking in themselves, or characteristic of the age and people to which they belong; and finally some, with less intrinsic value, may serve to introduce curious or instructive matter of comparison. To every person well acquainted with the subject, many things will probably occur, of which the omission may be regretted. Completeness, however, is evidently unattainable in an undertaking of this sort, and the passages taken from Grecian history have necessarily been regulated in part by the correspondences which presented themselves in the histories of other nations. It has been our object to draw examples from a great variety of sources; from different countries, in different ages, and in different states of

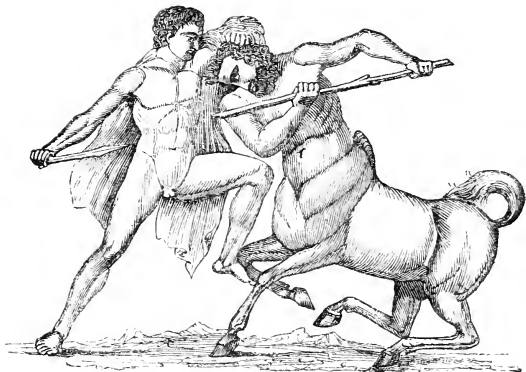
sisted in sacrificing innocent lives to his revenge, by means of a lying accusation: and the stern endurance of this man is dignified with the praise of fortitude and patriotism, without the slightest reference to its atrocious injustice. The story itself rests upon Justin's authority, and may reasonably be rejected as an improbable fiction.

civilization : and to show that no particular virtues or vices have been inherent in any age or nation : believing that human nature and human passions are everywhere alike, and that the great differences in national character are mainly to be ascribed to external circumstances and training. Comparisons of contrast, therefore, are no less valuable than comparisons of resemblance, when we can trace the causes which have produced a difference in conduct. It only remains to add, that we have not always thought it necessary to require a close analogy either of motives or of actions.

The instances chosen have not been very strictly confined to what rests upon undoubted testimony. Perhaps we learn little less of the habits and opinions of men, from ascertaining what they have believed of others, than from knowing what they have done themselves ; and, therefore, even works of fiction may be resorted to in some degree, care being taken to distinguish the character of the authorities. For example, we should have no hesitation in quoting even from the *Mort d'Arthur*, and still more from the earlier romances on which it is founded, in illustration of the manners of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in which those romances were written ; or, though on different grounds, the admirable narratives of the plagues of Florence and London by Boccaccio and Defoe, which probably are no less trustworthy for the character of the narrative, and in a great degree for the facts themselves, than Thucydides' description of the plague at Athens. Again, there is a sort of debateable ground, where genuine history begins to gain the ascendant over fable, as in the case of Aristomenes and Wallace, where we cannot tell, nor is it important to know, the exact measure of truth contained in the legends concerning them. The outlines of their lives we have reason to believe to be correct, and rejecting from their exploits all that is grossly improbable, the remainder will furnish us with a sufficiently clear idea of the accomplishments and adventures of a warrior of their respective ages. The poem of *Blind Harry* abounds in improbable fictions, but much more information concerning Wallace

and his contemporaries may be gained from it than from the meagre chronicles which composed the graver literature of the age. From such sources, therefore, we shall not scruple to borrow, though not without advertising the reader of their nature, and endeavouring, where necessary, to draw the boundary line between truth and fiction.

For reasons above stated, our extracts have usually been taken from contemporary authors, or at least from the earliest authorities extant. Where this rule has been departed from, it is because the originals offer no striking passages to select, and are too prolix to be given entire. In this case, condensation becomes necessary, and we have gladly availed ourselves of the labours of others who have already performed that task, in preference to seeking novelty at the expense perhaps of accuracy or elegance. For the same reason existing translations have been used, whenever a good translation of the particular passage could be found. Where none such occurred, we have endeavoured to adhere closely to our author, and even where his narrative has been much compressed, to give, as far as was possible, not only his substance, but his words.



CHAPTER I.

Mythic period of Grecian history—Savage state of Greece compared with that of Scandinavia—Anecdotes of Northern warriors—Hercules—Theseus—State of Greece in their time, illustrated by that of England subsequent to the Conquest—Argonautic expedition—Theban war—Story of Don Pedro of Castile—Trojan war.

THE traditions from which our knowledge of what is called the mythic age of Greece, or the age of fable, from the earliest notices of it to the Trojan war, is almost entirely derived, furnish few materials for a work like this, for where everything is misty and undefined, there can be little opportunity for comparison. The wonderful poetic talent displayed in their narration and embellishment has, however, given them a place in history, and an importance otherwise undeserved, and men study the actions and genealogy of an Achaian prince, as gravely as if he had been really the descendant of Jupiter, and the conqueror of monsters and oppressors innumerable. It becomes the more

interesting therefore to inquire into the actual condition of Greece in its earliest times, and ascertain, if possible, whether the godlike men, sprung from the Gods, of whose superhuman powers and exploits succeeding ages have read, until by the mere force of repetition they have half believed them, had in reality any advantage over barbarians of other races and regions. To guide us in the inquiry we have two sorts of information, totally distinct in their nature: the meagre notices of authentic history, and a copious store of mythological and poetical legends. So far as the former is available, we have no reason to think that the heroic age had much advantage over those dark times in which the foundations of modern Europe were laid. Passing over the account given by Thucydides of the earliest inhabitants of Greece as being applicable to any savage race, in the next stage of society, when the arts had somewhat advanced, in the reign of Minos, the first person perhaps of whom any rational and credible account is given, a code of honour existed which made strength not only the first but the sum-total of all virtues, and filled the sea with pirates and the land with robbers.

“Minos was the most ancient of all that by report we know to have built a navy, and he made himself master of the now Grecian sea, and both commanded the Isles called Cyclades,* and also was the first who sent colonies into most of the same, expelling thence the Carians, and constituting his own sons there for governors, and also freed the sea from pirates as much as he could, for the better coming in, as is likely, of his own revenue.

“For the Grecians in old time and such barbarians† as in the continent lived near unto the sea or else inhabited the islands, when they began more often to cross over to one another in ships, became thieves, and

* The cluster of the Archipelago nearest Attica.

† The Greeks called all other nations barbarians, which generally means no more than people of a different stock.

went abroad under the conduct of their most puissant men, both to enrich themselves and to fetch in maintenance for the weak : and falling upon towns unfortified, and scatteringly inhabited, rifled them, and made this the best means of their living ; being at that time a matter nowhere in disgrace, but rather carrying with it something of glory. This is manifest by some that dwell on the continent, among whom, so it be performed nobly, it is still esteemed as an ornament. The same also is proved by some of the ancient poets, who introduce men questioning such as sail by, on all coasts alike, whether they be thieves or not ;* as a thing neither scorned by such as were asked, nor upbraided by those that were desirous to know. They also robbed one another within the main land : and much of Greece useth that old custom, as the Locrians called *Ozolæ* (or *Stinkards*), the Acarnanians, and those of the continent in that quarter unto this day. Moreover the fashion of wearing iron remaineth yet with the people of that continent from their old trade of thieving.

“For once they were wont throughout all Greece to go armed, because their houses were unfenced and travelling unsafe, and accustomed themselves like the barbarians to the ordinary wearing of their armour. And the nations of Greece that live so yet, do testify that the same manner of life was anciently universal to all the rest.”†

A condition of society identical with that described in the latter part of this extract still exists among the Curdish and Caucasian and other Asiatic mountaineers, and existed till lately in the Scottish Highlands. But descriptions of the latter have been multiplied, until

* So Nestor addresses Telemachus, “Strangers, who are you, from whence do you navigate the watery way? Is it with any settled purpose, or do you roam at hazard like robbers over the sea, who wander wagering their own lives, bearing evil to others?” *Odyss.* iii. 71.

† Thucyd. book i. chap. 4, 5, 6. We use Hobbes’ translation.

they have become familiar in men's mouths as household terms; and we pass in preference to a less hackneyed subject. In the eighth and ninth centuries the piratical spirit of ancient Greece was revived among those fierce Danes and Norwegians, who led a life of constant rapine and bloodshed; of interminable warfare at home, of frightful devastation abroad. "The Sea-kings of the North were a race of beings whom Europe beheld with horror. Without a yard of territorial property, with no wealth but their ships, no force but their crews, and no hope but from their swords, they swarmed upon the boisterous ocean, and plundered in every district that they could approach..... It is declared to have been a law or custom in the North, that one of the male children should be selected to remain at home to inherit the government. The rest were exiled to the ocean, to wield their sceptres amid the turbulent waters. The consent of the northern societies entitled all men of royal descent, who assumed piracy as a profession, to enjoy the name of kings, though they possessed no territory. The sea-kings had the same honour, but they were only a portion of those pirates, or *vikingr*, who in the ninth century were covering the ocean. Not only the children of the kings, but every man of importance equipped ships, and roamed the seas to acquire property by force. Piracy was not only the most honourable occupation and the best harvest of wealth; it was not only consecrated to public estimation by the illustrious who pursued it, but no one was esteemed noble, no one was respected, who did not return in the winter to his home with ships laden with booty."* Part of the regulations of a band of pirates is preserved by Bartholinus, and may serve as a specimen of the better class, though the reader may not be inclined to agree with him in considering them as men "devoted to virtue, bravery, and humanity, rather than to the oppression of innocent persons." These regulations were called the Constitutions of King Half. "No one might wear a

* Turner, Ang.-Sax.

sword more than an ell in length, that they might be compelled to close in battle. Each was to be equal in strength to twelve ordinary men. They made prisoners neither women nor boys. None was to bind his wounds until the lapse of twenty hours. These men everywhere infested the land, and everywhere were victorious. They lay at anchor at the ends of headlands. They never raised bulwarks on their ships' sides, and never lowered their sails, let the wind blow as it would. Their captain never had in his ship more than sixty men." No less creditable were the ordinances of Hialmar, the sum of which was, that his men should plunder neither traders nor husbandmen; that they should neither rob women of their money, nor carry them off against their consent: and should not eat raw flesh.* The fiercer class indulged in this disgusting food, and washed it down suitably with draughts of blood. Savage in all things, it was an amusement to toss infants from one to another, and catch them on the points of their lances. Many used to work themselves literally into a state of bestial ferocity. Those who were subject to these paroxysms were called Berserkir: they studied to resemble wild beasts; they excited themselves to a strength which has been compared to that of bears; and this unnatural power was succeeded, as we may well suppose, by corresponding debility. In the French and Italian romances, we frequently find a warrior endowed, for a part of the day, with a double or treble share of strength; and it is not improbable that the fiction may have been derived from this species of frenzy, which is thus described by the Danish historian, Saxo Grammaticus. "Sivald had seven sons, so skilled in magic, that, impelled by the sudden access of fury, they used often to howl savagely, to gnaw their shields, to devour live coals, and rush fearlessly into fire; and this passion could only be appeased by confinement in fetters, or by human blood." This Sivald and Haldan were rivals

* Bartholinus, *De Causis Contemptæ a Danis Mortis*, lib. ii. 9.

for the Swedish crown. Sivald challenged Haldan to decide their quarrel by contending alone with himself and his seven sons. The latter answered that the legitimate form of the duel did not admit of more than two. "No wonder," replied his antagonist, "that a man without wife or offspring, whose mind and body are alike deficient in warmth, should refuse the proffered encounter. But my children, who own me as the author of their existence, and myself, have one common origin, and must be considered as one man." The force of the argument was admitted, and, in obedience to this modest request, Haldan knocked out the brains of the eight.

The same warrior was challenged by another Berserkir, named Harthben, who always had twelve chosen men in attendance to prevent his doing mischief when the fit was upon him. Upon hearing that Haldan undertook to fight himself and his followers, he was seized with a paroxysm which was not subdued until he had killed six of them, by way of trying his hand: and then he was killed by his antagonist, as he richly deserved, for throwing away half his chance.* So also we read that Odin could blunt the weapons of his enemies; that his soldiers went to battle without armour, biting their shields, raging like wolves or dogs: like bears or bulls in strength, they slaughtered their foes, and were themselves invulnerable to fire and sword.† At length, however, this passion changed from a distinction to a reproach, and was ultimately prohibited by penal laws.

Harold Harfager, or the Fairhaired, who consolidated Norway under his sceptre, A.D. 910, cleared the Northern Ocean from the scourge of piracy, as did Minos the Grecian seas. Still the spirit of depredation was alive. The spread of Christianity moderated the excesses of the Northmen, but it was long ere their fondness for freebooting was extinguished; nay, the very rites of religion were employed to give a sanction to robbery. Maritime expeditions seemed to the Danes pious and ne-

* Saxo, lib. vii.

† Bartholinus, ii. 5.

cessary, that they might protect themselves from the incursions of their Slavonic neighbours on the continent, and piracy was therefore practised under certain laws, which in the opinion of Bartholinus breathe a spirit of defence rather than of aggression. "Pirates had power to take such ships as appeared suited to their purpose, even without consent of the owners, upon payment of one-eighth of the booty by way of hire. Before a voyage they made confession to the priests, and having undergone penance, they received the sacrament, as if at the point of death, believing that things would go more prosperously if they duly propitiated God before war. Content with their food and armour, they avoided burdening their vessels, and took nothing that could delay their voyage. Their watches were frequent, their mode of life sparing. They slept leaning upon their oars. Their battles were numerous: their victory ever easy, and almost bloodless. The booty was shared equally, the master receiving no larger portion than a common rower. Those Christians whom they found enslaved in the captured vessels, they presented with clothing, and dismissed to their own homes."*

The frantic ravages of these barbarians have been described by the sufferers, and belong in part to our own history; while those committed by the unknown tribes who two thousand years before occupied the other extremity of Europe, are long since forgotten, or remembered only in the flattering traditions of their countrymen. The former, therefore, are known and execrated, while the latter stand fair with the world: and in the absence of evidence, we are far from wishing to impute to them that bestial ferocity which so often disgraced the Northmen: but who can compare the passages just given with that quoted from Thucydides, without being convinced that they refer to corresponding periods of civilization, and describe similar principles, if not similar modes of action? And as the best historical accounts which we can procure represent the feelings and habits of the early

* Barthol., l. ii. 9.

Greeks as closely akin to those of our own barbarous ancestors, so their traditions and fables lead us to the same conclusion. The Scaldic poems bear, indeed, a more savage cast; some say from the inhospitable rigour of our northern sky; but more probably because we possess them in their original or nearly their original state, while the earliest Greek compositions extant were written in an age comparatively civilized. But the heroes of both were actuated by the same spirit. Siegfried and Wolf Dietrich differ little but in external ornament from Castor, or Achilles, or Diomed; their pride was in the same accomplishments, their delight in the same pleasures, their hope in an immortality of the same sensual enjoyments.*

* We speak with some degree of doubt, both from the fluctuating notions of the Greeks upon this head, and from imperfect acquaintance with their opinions. The unhesitating belief of the Celtic nations in a happy immortality was known even in the time of Lucan, and is celebrated by him in a fine and well-known passage. The immortality of Homer's heroes was mournful and discontented. "Talk not to me of death," says Achilles (Od. xi. 487), "I would rather be the hired servant of some needy man, whose means of life are scanty, than rule over the whole of the deceased." Other passages to the same effect are collected at the beginning of the third book of the Republic, by Plato, who objects seriously to their effect as making death an object of terror. Yet, in another passage, Homer speaks of the "Elysian plain, and the ends of the earth, where man's life is easiest, where there is no snow, nor rain, nor winter, but thither ocean ever wafts the clear-toned gales of the west to refresh men." (Od. iv. 565.) Hesiod, on the other hand (Works and Days, v. 166), and, some centuries after, Pindar (Ol. ii.), speak of a future life as perfectly happy, describing it in terms closely similar to those of the last quotation from Homer. All these writers appear to place their happiness in perfect rest: the blessed are no longer compelled to till the earth, or navigate the ocean; they lead a *careless* life; there is no reference to sensual pleasures, except that the earth produces fruits spontaneously thrice a year, nor even to their continuing to take delight in arms or in the chase. In later authors they are

Some sketch of the life of Starchaterus, a purely fictitious person, may serve as a specimen of these stories.

Starchaterus was born in Sweden, a few years after the Christian era. He was of giant stature, and of strength and courage correspondent to the magnitude of his frame, so that in prowess he was held inferior to none of mortal parentage; and, as he excelled all in bodily endowments, so his life was protracted to three times the usual duration of human existence. Like his great prototype, the Grecian Hercules, he traversed the neighbouring regions, and went even to Ireland and Constantinople in quest of adventures; but, unlike him, he was animated by a most intolerant hatred of everything approaching to luxury, insomuch that he treated an invitation to dinner as an insult, and inflicted severe punishment upon all who were so imprudently hospitable as to request his company. For it was the mark of a buffoon and parasite, he said, to run after the smell of another man's kitchen, for the sake of better fare.* In other respects the severity of his

described as retaining the habits and pleasures of life: see the note on the scholium of Callistratus, chap. v.; Ov. Met. iv. 444; and more especially the passage in Virgil, vi. 651, which, but for wanting the personal superintendence of Odin, bears much resemblance to a refined Valhalla.

The chief beheld their chariots from afar,
 Their shining arms, and coursers trained to war;
 Their lances fixed in earth, their steeds around,
 Free from their harness, graze the flowery ground.
 The love of horses, which they had alive,
 And care of chariots, after death survive.
 Some cheerful souls were feasting on the plain,
 Some did the song and some the choir maintain.

Dryden.

Mitford, on the other hand, says, that "the drunken paradise of the Scandinavian Odin was really a notion, as we learn from Plato, of the highest antiquity among the Greeks." (Chap. ii. sect. 1.) He has not, however, given references, and we much regret that we have not been able to find the passage.

* He had the advantage over Hercules here; see the *Alcestes*, v. 763, ed. Monk.

manners was more commendable ; when he found any of the classes who live by the follies or vices of mankind mixing with soldiers, he drove them away with the scourge, esteeming them unworthy to receive death from the hands of brave men. In addition to his other accomplishments, he was skilled in poetry, and persecuted luxury in verse no less successfully than by corporeal inflictions, as is evident from certain of his compositions, which have been translated into Latin by Saxo Grammaticus.

He went to Russia on purpose to fight Visin, who possessed the power of blunting weapons with a look, and trusting in this magic power, exercised all sorts of cruelty and oppression. Starchaterus rendered the charm of no avail by covering his sword with thin leather, and then obtained an easy victory.

Nine warriors of tried valour offered to Helgo, king of Norway, the alternative of doing battle singly against the nine, or losing his bride upon his marriage-day. Helgo thought it best to appear by his champion, and requested the assistance of Starchaterus, who was so eager for the adventure, that in following Helgo to the appointed place, in one day, and on foot, he performed a journey which had occupied the king, who travelled on horseback, during twelve days. On the morrow, which was the appointed day, ascending a mountain, which was the place of meeting, he chose a spot exposed to the wind and snow, and then, as if it were spring, throwing off his clothes, he set himself to dislodge the fleas that nestled in them. Then the nine warriors ascended the mountain on the other side, and showed the difference of their hardihood by lighting a fire in a sheltered spot. Not perceiving their antagonist, one went to look out from the mountain top, who saw at a distance an old man covered with snow up to the shoulders. They asked him if it were he who was to fight with them, and being answered in the affirmative, inquired further, whether he would receive them singly or all together. His reply was rather more churlish than the question deserved : “ When the dogs bark at me, I drive them off all

together, and not one by one." Then, after a severe battle, he slew them all.

At last, being overtaken by age, he thought it fit to terminate his life before his glory was dimmed by decrepitude; for men used to consider it disgraceful for a warrior to perish by sickness. So he hung round his neck one hundred and twenty pounds of gold, the spoil of one Olo, to buy the good offices of an executioner, thinking it fit that the wealth which he had obtained by another man's death should be spent in procuring his own. And meeting Hather, whose father he had formerly slain, he exhorted him to take vengeance for that injury, and pointed out what he would gain by doing so. Hather willingly consented, and Starchaterus, stretching out his neck, bade him strike boldly, adding, for his encouragement, that if he leaped between the severed head and the trunk before the latter touched the earth, he would become invincible in arms. Now, whether he said this out of good will, or to be quits with his slayer, who ran a good chance of being crushed by the falling giant, is doubtful. The head, stricken off at a blow, bit the earth, retaining its ferocity in death: but Starchaterus' real meaning remained unknown, for Hather showed his prudence by declining to take a leap, which had he taken, he might never have leaped again.*

This is an early and rude specimen of an errant knight; the same character which was afterwards expanded into Roland and Launcelot, the paladins and peers of Charlemagne and Arthur, worthies closely allied to the heroes of Homer and Hesiod. The triple-bodied Geryon, the Nemean lion and Lernæan hydra, the deliverance of Andromeda by Perseus, the capture of the golden fleece, and above all, perhaps, Amycus, who compelled all strangers to box with him, till he was beaten by Pollux, and bound by oath to renounce the practice, are entirely in unison with the spirit and imagery of chivalric romance. Examples to this effect might easily be multiplied. But an essay on the fictions of the Greeks would

* Joannes Magnus, Hist. Gothorum.

be foreign to the scope of this publication : and it would be absurd to enter upon a critical investigation of a series of stories, extended by some chronologers over seven centuries, from the foundation of Argos to the Trojan war, while Newton contracts them within a century and a half, which tell of little but bloodshed, abductions, and violence of all sorts, intermixed, however, with notices of those who invented the useful arts and fostered the gradual progress of civilization. As we approach to the Trojan war, a sort of twilight history begins to dawn upon us. It is to what may seem at first the strongholds of fiction, to the exploits of Hercules and Theseus, that we refer. The earliest ascertained fact is the establishment of a regular government by Minos, who also cleared the sea from pirates. At no long interval the above-named heroes made another step in civilization ; they cleared the land from rapine, as Minos had cleared the sea. Other men, roaming in search of adventures, had carried bloodshed through the land at the suggestion of their passions or for the advancement of their fame ; but Hercules first traversed the earth with the express design of avenging the oppressed and exterminating their oppressors, and the example was soon after followed by his kinsman Theseus. Their exploits, of course, are chiefly fabulous : but it is worthy of observation that those of Theseus approach much nearer to probability than the far-famed labours of Hercules. Indeed the history of the former presents this peculiarity, that the accounts of his youth are consistent, and scarcely improbable, while those of his age run into all the extravagance of romance. Theseus, travelling from Trœzen to Athens, was strongly urged to go by sea, the way by land being beset with robbers and murderers. He refused to do so, being inflamed with emulation of Hercules' renown ; and on the journey signalized himself by slaying Sinnis, surnamed the Pine-bender, because he dismembered travellers by tying them to the tops of trees forcibly brought together and then allowed to start asunder ; Procrustes, who exhibited a passion for uniformity worthy a German general of the old school, in

reducing all men to the measure of his own bed, by stretching those who were too short, and docking those who were too long; together with others of less note, and similar habits. That Plutarch believed in these stories is evident, from the tone in which he recites them; a corroboration, indeed, of no great weight, for he proceeds with equal gravity to relate things which no one will credit; but in this instance his account of the state of Greece gives warranty for his belief, and is itself confirmed by our knowledge of later ages. The passage has often been quoted, but it is striking and to the purpose, and its want of novelty, therefore, shall be no bar to its insertion. "The world at that time brought forth men, which for strongness in their arms, for swiftness of their feet, and for a general strength of the whole body, did far pass the common force of others, and were never weary for any labour or travail they took in hand. But for all this, they never employed these gifts of nature to any honest or profitable thing; but rather delighted villainously to hurt and wrong others; as if all the fruit and profit of their extraordinary strength had consisted in cruelty and violence only, and to be able to keep others under and in subjection; and to force, destroy, and spoil all that came to their hands. Thinking that the more part of those which think it a shame to do ill, and commend justice, equity, and humanity, do it of faint, cowardly hearts, because they dare not wrong others, for fear they should receive wrong themselves; and, therefore, that they which by might could have vantage over others, had nothing to do with such qualities."*

The enormities ascribed to Sinnis and his fellows have discredited the whole train of adventures to which they belong; but this is an untenable ground of doubt. He who reads descriptions of the state of England, before

* We quote here, and in future, from Sir Thomas North's translation, A.D. 1579. North translated from the French of Amyot. His version has been compared with the original, and corrected.

laws were strong enough to control private violence, given by contemporaries who saw what they relate, and whose narratives bear the impress of sincerity, will better appreciate the extent of human ferocity. In the reign of Stephen disorder was at its height. "The barons cruelly oppressed the wretched men of the land with castle-works, and when the castles were made, they filled them with devils and evil men. Then took they those whom they supposed to have any goods, both by night and day, labouring men and women, and threw them into the prison for their gold and silver, and inflicted on them unutterable tortures: for never were any martyrs so tortured as they were. Some they hanged up by the feet, and smoked them with foul smoke, and some by the thumbs, or the head, and hung coats of mail on their feet. They tied knotted cords about their heads, and twisted them until the pain went to their brains. They put them into dungeons where were adders, and snakes, and toads, and so destroyed them. Some they placed in a crucet house; that is, in a chest that was short and narrow, and not deep, wherein they put sharp stones, and so thrust the man therein, that they broke all the limbs. In many of the castles were things loathsome and grim, called *Sachenteges*, of which two or three men had enough to bear one. They were thus made: they were fastened to a beam, having a sharp iron to go about a man's throat, so that he could in no direction either sit, or lie, or sleep, but bear all that iron. Many thousands they wore out with hunger. I neither can, nor may I tell all the wounds and pains which they inflicted on wretched men in this land."*

"Some, seeing the sweetness of their country turned into bitterness, went into foreign parts: others built hovels about churches in hope of security, and there passed life in fear and pain, subsisting for lack of food (for famine was felt dreadfully over all England) upon the forbidden and unused flesh of dogs and horses, or relieving hunger with raw herbs and roots, until throughout the provinces

* Ingram's Saxon Chronicle.

men, wasted by famine, died in crowds, or went voluntarily with their families into a miserable exile. You might see towns of famous name, standing lonely, and altogether emptied by the death of their inhabitants of all ages and sexes; the fields whitening under a thriving harvest, but the husbandman cut off by pestilential famine ere it ripened: and all England wore the face of grief and calamity, of misery and oppression. In addition to these evils, the savage multitude of barbarians who resorted to England for the gains of warfare was moved neither by the bowels of piety nor by any feeling of human compassion for such misery: everywhere they conspired from their castles to do all wickedness, being always at leisure to rob the poor, to promote quarrels, and intent everywhere upon slaughter with all the malice of a wicked mind." Even churchmen amused themselves with these pastimes. "The bishops themselves, as I am ashamed to say, not all indeed, but many of them, clad in handsome armour, rode up and down on prancing horses with these upsetters of their country; shared in their booty; exposed to fetters, or torture, knights, or any wealthy persons soever, whom they intercepted; and being themselves the head and cause of all this wickedness, they threw the blame not on themselves, but only upon their followers."*

Enough of general descriptions, which are fully borne out by the particulars related. "In the reign of Stephen, Robert, the son of Hubert, had gotten possession of the castle of Devizes. He was a man exceeding all within memory in barbarity and blasphemy, who used freely to make boast, that he had been present when twenty-four monks were burnt together with their church, and profess that he would do as much in England, and ruin utterly the abbey of Malmesbury. If he ever dismissed a prisoner unransomed, and without the torture, which very seldom happened, at such times, when they thanked him in God's name, I have with these ears heard him answer, 'God will never own the obligation to me.' He would expose

* *Gesta Stephani*, ap. Duchesne, *Script. Normann.* p. 961, 2.

his captives naked to the burning sun, anointed with honey, to attract flies, and such other tormenting insects.* This worthy met with a fit end, being taken and hanged; but this act of retribution was one of illegal violence, being done by a knight who held Marlborough Castle, without a shadow of authority, and apparently on the principle that any one had a right to abate a nuisance.

“In these times (the reign of William Rufus) men come not to great name but by the highest wickedness. Thomas, a great baron near Laudun in France, was great in name, because he was extreme in wickedness. At enmity with the surrounding churches, he had brought all their wealth into his own exchequer. If any one by force or guile were holden in his keeping, truly might that man say, ‘the pains of hell got hold upon me.’ Murder was his glory and delight. Against all usage, he placed a countess in a dungeon, whom the foul ruffian harassed with fetters and torments to extort money. He would speak words of peace to his neighbour, and stab him to the heart with a smile, and hence, under his cloak, he more often wore his sword naked than sheathed. Therefore, men feared, respected, worshipped him. All through France was he spoken of. Daily did his estate, his treasure, his vassalage increase. Wouldst thou hear the end of this villain? Being stricken with a sword unto death, refusing to repent, and turning away his head from the Lord’s body, in such manner he perished: so that it might well be said, ‘Befitting to your life was that death.’ You have seen Robert de Belesme, a Norman baron, who when established in his castle was Pluto, Megæra, Cerberus, or anything that can be named more dreadful. He took pains not to dismiss, but to dispatch his captives. Pretending to be in play, he put out his son’s eyes with his thumbs, while he was muffled up in a cloak; he impaled persons of both sexes. Horrid slaughter was as a meat pleasant to his soul: therefore was he found in all men’s mouths, so that the wonderful doings of Robert de Belesme passed into proverbs. Let

* William of Malmesbury, *Hist. Novell.* lib. ii.

us come at length to the end. He who had afflicted others in prison, being at last thrown into prison by King Henry, ended his wicked life by an enduring punishment.”*

It was this state of disorder which produced knight-errantry, and there is nothing absurd in believing that equal lawlessness in another country was checked by the same sort of interference. The reality of knight-errantry has, indeed, been questioned; it has been pronounced a fiction, suited to the wants of the period in which it was supposed to exist. If this were so, and the tales of Hercules and Theseus equally groundless, it would still be curious to see that men had been led to imagine the same means of making amends for the want of an executive power: but we do not believe this to be the case. The romances gave system and consistency to the scattered acts of individuals; they described the better qualities of knighthood in their own days, and filled up the picture with imaginary virtues and preter-human prowess, attributes which men are always ready to confer on their ancestors, as Nestor makes the heroes with whom he fought in youth far superior to those whom he lectured in old age, and Homer endows those who fought under Troy with the strength of three or four men, “such as mortals now are.” But their productions bear the stamp of copies, not originals, and it is not very easy to believe that they would have invented, or their audience and readers relished, characters and rules of action for which their own experience gave no warrant.

There is, however, a double Theseus, of historic as well as legendary fame. In his latter capacity, both for the degree of reality and the nature of his exploits, he may be compared to Arthur; in his former, still to draw an illustration from British history, he is not unworthy to be placed by the side of Alfred. The union of these two, discordant as it may appear, is not more so than that of the poetic and the historical Theseus. Alfred, indeed, signalised his military talents in many hard-

* Henry of Huntingdon, *De Episcopis sui temporis*.

fought fields, but his victories were those of a general: the exploits of Theseus were those of a knight. But among the mass of stories of questionable truth or unquestioned falsehood relating to him, it is generally acknowledged that this man, whose very existence we might else have doubted, was the author of extensive and judicious reforms in government, such as proved the foundation of Attic greatness: reforms which he effected by the rarest and most virtuous of all sacrifices, the resignation of his own power.* Attica was divided into twelve districts, shires we might call them, except that, taken all together, they were less than one of the larger English counties. Professedly forming one body, and owning a precarious obedience to one prince, they had still their petty and conflicting interests, and could with difficulty be induced to concur in any measures for the benefit of the whole. Theseus, encouraged by the popularity which he had gained by delivering Athens from its subjection to Crete,† undertook to substitute a better polity. "He went through the several towns, and persuaded the inhabitants to give up their separate councils and magistrates, and submit to a common jurisdiction. Every man was to retain his dwelling and his property as before; but justice was to be administered and all public business transacted at Athens. The mass of the people came into his measures, and to subdue the reluctance of the powerful, who were loath to resign the importance accruing from the local magistracies, he gave up much of his own authority, reserving only the command of the army, and the care of watching over the execution of the laws. Opposition was silenced by his liberality, together with the fear of his power, ability, and courage, and the union of Attica was effected

* Perhaps this is too positively asserted. No doubt exists as to the political operation, but it has been questioned whether Theseus had a more real existence than the other heroes who gave their names to, or were named after, the several Athenian tribes. See Arnold's *Thucyd.*, Appendix II.

† History of Greece, p. 5.

by him and made lasting. To bind it closer, without disturbing the religious observances of the several towns, he instituted a common festival in honour of Minerva, which was called the feast of union, and (*Panathenæa*) the feast of all the Athenians.”*

This process bears some resemblance to the consolidation of the Saxon Heptarchy, nominally effected by Egbert, but completed and made truly beneficial by Alfred. The evils which were to be reformed were very different in the two cases: at Athens civil dissension was to be remedied; in England a rude people, intermixed with foreign barbarians more ferocious than themselves, and reduced to poverty by a series of destructive invasions, required a strong curb for the re-establishment of order and security. We must not expect, therefore, to find any resemblance between their institutions: the Saxons required no measures to prevent civil war, and inspire a spirit of nationality; the Athenians, though well inclined to civil broils, respected, from the earliest dawn of history, the security of property, and in consequence far outstripped the rest of Greece in wealth and refinement. Nevertheless the names of these princes may fairly be selected to adorn the same page: both advanced beyond their age in legislative and political science; both directed their wisdom, power, and popularity to truly noble ends; and therefore merit the respect of all who believe rank and office to have been instituted for other ends than for the advantage of those who possess them.

We have spoken of Hercules and Theseus as indicating the commencement of Grecian history. Previous to them, facts are mentioned which we have no ground to disbelieve, as the various settlements by Phœnician or Egyptian emigrants; but all further particulars of these persons, with the exception of Minos, are of such a nature, that where we find no internal evidence to pronounce them fabulous we can yet assign but scanty reasons for relying confidently upon their truth. But about this era our

* History of Greece, p. 6.

knowledge begins to increase. We must refer to it an event of which it is not easy to fix the date with certainty; namely, the celebrated Argonautic expedition, in which both these heroes are said to have joined: a statement, however, irreconcilable with the accounts of Theseus' introduction to Ægeus, and the plot formed against him by Medea.* Without troubling ourselves to account for these discrepancies, it is evident that the expedition, if it ever took place, which there seems reason to believe in spite of Bryant's opposition, who would ascribe this, and almost all other legends, to some faint traditions of the deluge and preservation of Noah, must have borne a close resemblance to the Danish piratical excursions which we have already described. Not long after occurs the first confederate war mentioned in Grecian history, that of the Seven against Thebes;† an event so closely connected with mythology that its reality might reasonably be questioned, but for the testimony of Homer and Hesiod. The revolting nature of the struggle between two brothers, for the kingdom of a banished, miserable, and neglected father, would incline us indeed to give as little credit to the concluding tragedy of the house of Laius, as to the series of crimes and misery by which that house had been polluted: but all arguments founded upon the horrors of such fratricidal warfare fall to the ground, when in the brightest period of chivalry we find it revived with no less rancour, and

* The arrival of Theseus at Athens roused Medea's jealousy, and she proposed to poison him. She did not arrive at Athens until some time after she had reached Greece with Jason and the Argonauts; while the journey of Theseus from Træzen to Athens appears to have been his first exploit. Either, therefore, Theseus was not an Argonaut, or this charge against Medea is ungrounded.

† Eteocles and Polynices, the sons of Œdipus, agreed, after the expulsion of their father, to reign alternate years in Thebes. Eteocles, however, at the end of the first year, refused to surrender his power, upon which Polynices laid siege to the city, assisted by six other princes. The brothers met in battle, and fell by each other's hands.

a no less fatal end, and the flower of French knighthood a calm spectator, nay, almost an actor in the scene. The strife between Don Pedro of Castile, and his brother Henry of Transtamara, the deadly struggle in which Pedro, who had already slain one brother, fell, when defeated and a prisoner, by the dagger of another against whom his own hand was armed, involve circumstances of horror scarce less adapted to dramatic effect than those legends which have so often employed the Greek tragedians.

Don Pedro was the legitimate heir to the crown of Castile. Don Henry and Don Fadrique (or Frederick) were his half-brothers by Donna Leonora de Guzman, whom their father had entertained as his mistress, and even proclaimed queen, during the life-time of his lawful wife. When Pedro succeeded to the throne, at his mother's instigation he put her rival to death : his brothers, Henry and Fadrique, escaped, and the former renounced his allegiance : the latter fled into Portugal ; but after some time he made his peace, returned, and was appointed master of the order of St. Iago. When several months had elapsed, he was invited to join the court at Seville, and take his share in the amusements of an approaching tournament. He accepted the invitation, but was sternly and ominously received, and immediately executed within the palace. The friends of Pedro asserted, that the king had, that very day, detected Don Fadrique in a correspondence with his brother Henry and the Arragonese ; while popular belief attributed the slaughter of the master to the influence of Pedro's mistress, Maria de Padilla. The circumstances of this event are powerfully described in one of the Spanish ballads, so admirably translated by Mr. Lockhart. There is a peculiarity of construction in the ballad, the person of the narrator being changed in the course of it. It is commenced by the victim himself, who describes the alacrity with which he obeyed his brother's summons.

I sat alone in Coimbra—the town myself had ta'en,—
 When came into my chamber a messenger from Spain :
 There was no treason in his look, an honest look he wore,
 I from his hand the letter took—my brother's seal it bore.

“Come, brother dear, the day draws near ('twas thus bespoke
 the king)

For plenar court and nightly sport, within the listed ring.”
 Alas, unhappy master, I easy credence lent :
 Alas, for fast and faster I at his bidding went.

When I set out from Coimbra, and 'passed the bounds of
 Spain,

I had a goodly company of spearmen in my train ;
 A gallant force, a score of horse, and sturdy mules thirteen ;
 With joyful heart I held my course, my years were young
 and green.

A journey of good fifteen days within the week was done,
 I halted not, though signs I got, dark tokens many a one ;
 A strong stream mastered horse and mule, I lost a poniard
 fine,

And left a page within the pool, a faithful page of mine.

Yet on to proud Seville I rode—when to the gate I came,
 Before it stood a man of God to warn me from the same :
 The words he spake I would not hear, his grief I would
 not see ;

“I seek,” I said, “my brother dear—I will not stop for thee.”

No lists were closed upon the sand, for royal tourney dight,
 No pawing horse was seen to stand, I saw no armed knight :
 Yet aye I gave my mule the spur, and hasted through the
 town,

I stopt before his palace-door, then gaily leapt I down.

They shut the door—my trusty score of friends were left
 behind ;

I would not hear their whispered fear, no harm was in my
 mind ;

I greeted Pedro, but he turned—I wot his look was cold ;
 His brother from his knee he spurned—“Stand off, thou mas-
 ter bold.

“Stand off, stand off, thou traitor strong !” 'twas thus he sai
 to me,

“Thy time on earth shall not be long—what brings thee to
 my knee ?

My lady craves a new year's gift, and I will keep my word ;
Thy head methinks may serve the shift—good yeoman, draw
thy sword—”

The master lay upon the floor, ere well that word was said,
Then in a charger off they bore his pale and bloody head.
They brought it to Padilla's chair, they bowed them on the
knee—

“ King Pedro greets thee, lady fair, his gift he sends to thee.”

She gazed upon the master's head, her scorn it could not
scare,

And cruel were the words she spoke, and proud her glances
were.

“ Thou now shalt pay, thou traitor base, the debt of many a
year,

My dog shall lick that haughty face, no more that lip shall
sneer.”

She seized it by the clotted hair, and o'er the window flung :
The mastiff smelt it in his lair, forth at her cry he sprung ;
The mastiff that had crouched so low, to lick the master's
hand,

He tossed the morsel to and fro, and licked it on the sand.

And ever as the mastiff tore, his bloody teeth were shown,
With growl and snort he made his sport, and picked it to the
bone !

The baying of the beast was loud ; and swiftly on the street
There gathered round a gaping crowd to see the mastiff eat.

Then out and spake King Pedro—“ What governance is this ?
The rabble rout the gate without torment my dogs, I wiss.”

Then out and spake King Pedro's page—“ It is the master's
head,

The mastiff tears it in his rage, therewith they have him
fed.”

Then out and spake the ancient nurse, that nursed the bro-
thers twain—

“ On thee, King Pedro, lies the curse ; thy brother thou hast
slain ;

A thousand harlots there may be within the realms of Spain,
But where is she can give to thee thy brother back again ?”

Came darkness o'er King Pedro's brow, when thus he heard
her say ;

He sorely rued the accursed vow he had fulfilled that day ;

He passed unto his paramour, where on her couch she
lay.

Leaning from out her painted bower, to see the mastiff's
play.

He drew her to a dungeon dark, a dungeon strong and deep ;
“ My father's son lies stiff and stark, and there are few to
weep.

Fadrique's blood for vengeance calls, his cry is in mine
ear ;

Thou art the cause, thou harlot false ; in darkness lie thou
here.”

After Pedro had alienated his people's hearts by his cruelty, Don Henry returned with a formidable body of French auxiliaries. At first the fortune of the rightful owner of the throne, who was supported by Edward the Black Prince, prevailed, and the invader was obliged to retire back to France : but suddenly renewing the attack, assisted by Du Guesclin, the flower of French knight-hood, after the English auxiliaries had quitted Spain, he defeated and took prisoner his brother. Upon entering the chamber where he was confined, Henry exclaimed, “ Where is that whoreson and Jew, who calls himself King of Castile ? ” Pedro, as proud and fearless as he was cruel, stepped instantly forward, and replied, “ Here I stand, the lawful son and heir of Don Alphonso, and it is thou that art but a false bastard.” The rival brothers instantly grappled like lions ; the French knights, and Du Guesclin himself, looking on. Henry drew his poniard, and wounded Pedro in the face, but his body was protected by a coat of mail. A violent struggle ensued. Henry fell across a bench, and his brother, being uppermost, had well nigh mastered him, when one of Henry's followers seizing Don Pedro by the leg, turned him over, and his master thus at length gaining the upper hand, instantly stabbed the king to the heart. Menard, in his history of Du Guesclin, says that, while all around gazed like statues on the furious struggle of the brothers, Du Guesclin exclaimed to this attendant of Henry, “ What ! will you stand by, and see your

master placed at such a pass by a false renegade? Make forward and help him, for well you may.”*

At Athens, the poets who contended for the tragic prize, were expected to exhibit three pieces, which, from their number, were called collectively a trilogy, together with a fourth, satirical, drama, which came last in the order of representation, like our farces now. Often they chose for the argument of these tragedies different events in the same story, so that the three formed a connected whole: of which an instance, the only instance extant, remains in the *Agamemnon*, *Choephoroi*, and *Eumenides* of *Æschylus*. The tale which has just been narrated is well fitted for this kind of representation, and would furnish materials not unworthy even of that poet's genius. In the first play we may imagine an insulted queen and deserted wife, brooding over past injuries, rejoicing in the prospect of revenge, and urging the savage temper of her son to seek it in the blood of those who should have been dearest to him; the play terminating with the death of *Leonora de Guzman*, and the escape of her sons, preserved, like *Orestes*, to be at once the ministers of vengeance and the instruments of further crime. For the second the unsuspecting confidence of *Don Fadrique*, his rejection of the signs and warnings, which were offered in vain, and the successful machinations of a wicked, perhaps a rejected woman, acting upon the proud and cruel *Pedro*, are well suited; while the chorus would find a fitting part, at first, in dark and indistinct presages of evil, and lamentations over the blindness with which the fated victim rushed into the snare; and at the end, in indignant description of the circumstances of horror narrated in the ballad, and in joining the aged nurse to bewail the death of her foster son, and denouncing vengeance upon the murderer's head. The third would contain the capture of *Pedro*, the mutual defiance and death-struggle of the brothers, and the barbarous exposure by *Henry* of his brother's corpse: while at the end the impression of these horrors might be relieved by

* Lockhart's Spanish Ballads.

the constant love of Maria de Padilla, who, now neglected and despised, still watched over the forsaken body of her monarch and lover, with a fidelity worthy of a purer bosom.*

We reach at length the Trojan war, the point assumed

* See a subsequent ballad in the same collection:—

In her hot cheek the blood mounts high, as she stands
gazing down

Now on proud Henry's royal state, his robe and golden
crown,

And now upon the trampled cloak, that hides not from
her view

The slaughtered Pedro's marble brow, and lips of livid
hue.

Away she flings her garments, her broïdered veil and
vest,

As if they should behold her love within her lovely
breast—

As if to call upon her foes the constant heart to see

Where Pedro's form is still enshrined, and evermore
shall be.

But none on fair Maria looks, by none her breast is seen,
Save angry heaven, remembering well the murder of the
Queen;

The wounds of jealous harlot rage, which virgin blood
must staunch,

And all the scorn that mingled in the bitter cup of Blanch.

The utter coldness of neglect that haughty spirit stings,

As if ten thousand fiends were there, with all their
flapping wings.

She wraps the veil about her head, as if 'twere all a
dream,

The love—the murder—and the wrath—and that rebel-
lious scream.

For still there's shouting on the plain, and spurring far
and nigh;

“God save the King—Amen! Amen! King Henry!”
is the cry,

While Pedro all alone is left upon his bloody bier—

Not one remains to cry to God, “Our Lord lies mur-
dered here.”

by Thucydides for the commencement of his sketch of Grecian history : a circumstance alone sufficient to discredit the scepticism of those who believe it to be a mere fabulous legend. The universal voice of antiquity testifies to its reality, and we know not of any arguments strong enough to shake this testimony. Herodotus, on the authority of the Persians, mentions the Rape of Helen as one of a series of reprisals consequent upon the aggression of the Phœnicians, who carried off *Io* ; the cause and commencement of hostility between the Greeks and the Asiatic nations. The former were clearly in the wrong, in the opinion of the Persians, both because the rape of Helen only balanced accounts, and because the Greeks made such injuries a ground for war. “Up to that time they confined themselves to mutual depredations ; but the Greeks set the example of carrying war from one continent to the other. Now, to carry off women is the act of rogues ; but to be over eager to avenge their loss is the part of fools ; and wise men will take no thought for them after they are gone : for it is plain that they would not have been run away with, except with their own good will. And in truth, say the Persians, the Asiatics made no account of the carrying off their women : but the Greeks collected a mighty armament on account of a Lacedæmonian female, and then came to Asia, to pull down the empire of Priam !” * So thought the Persians. Herodotus confesses that he is not prepared to say how these things took place, and sets us the example of hastening to ground which he can tread with some certainty. That there is no intrinsic improbability in the story, has already been asserted by Mitford, on the ground of its close analogy to an incident in the history of the British islands.

Dermod Mac Morough (or Mac Murchad), prince of

* Herod. i. 4. It may be inferred from hence that the high estimation of female chastity, and implacable resentment consequent upon injuries in that respect, which now characterise Eastern manners, did not prevail in the age of Herodotus. That these feelings did prevail at a very remote period, appears from the story of Darius and Alexander.

Leinster, was attached to Dervorghal, wife of Tiernan O'Ruark, another Irish chief, who held the county of Leitrim, with some adjacent districts,—a lady of great beauty, but small virtue, who took advantage of her husband's being driven into hiding by O'Connor, who was then predominant in Ireland, to elope with her lover. "An outrage of this kind was not always regarded with abhorrence by the Irish; they considered it rather as an act of pardonable gallantry, or such an offence as a reasonable pecuniary compensation might atone for. But the sullen and haughty prince, provoked more by the insolence and treachery of his ravisher than the infidelity of his wife, conceived the most determined animosity against Dermot. He practised secretly with O'Connor, promised the most inviolable attachment to his interest, and prevailed on him, not only to reinstate him in his possessions, but to revenge the insult of Mac Morough, whom he represented, and justly, as a faithless vassal, really devoted to the service of his rival. The King of Connaught led his forces into Leinster, rescued Dervorghal from her paramour, and restored her to her friends; with whom she lived, if not in a state of reconciliation with her husband, at least in that opulence and splendour which enabled her to atone for the crime of infidelity, by the usual method of magnificent donations to the church."* This domestic squabble led to more than usually important results, for the expelled Dermot applied to our Henry II. for assistance, and the conquest of Ireland followed.

The ambition of Agamemnon, however, is regarded by Thucydides as the cause of the war; the abduction of Helen served only as the pretext. "To me it seemeth that Agamemnon got together that fleet, not so much for that he had with him the suitors of Helena, bound thereto by oath to Tyndareus, as for that he exceeded the rest in power. For Atreus, after that Eurystheus was slain by the Heraclidæ, obtained the kingdom of Mycenæ, and whatever else had been under him, for himself. To which greatness Agamemnon succeeding, and also far excelling

* Leland's Hist. Ireland.

the rest in shipping, took that war in hand, as I conceive it, and assembled the said forces, not so much on favour as by fear. For it is clear, that he himself both conferred most ships to that action, and that some also he lent to the Arcadians. And this is likewise confirmed by Homer (if any think his testimony sufficient), who, at the delivery of the sceptre unto him, calleth him, 'Of many isles, and of all Argos king.' '* Argos here signifies the whole peninsula, called afterwards Peloponnesus. It is plain, however, from Homer, that the sovereignty here ascribed to him was of a most uncertain and insecure tenure; that his subordinate princes were in fact independent within their own dominions, and were too high spirited and powerful to be maltreated with impunity. Altogether, without the elaborate machinery of the feudal system, the power and influence of Agamemnon seem to have resembled that possessed by the kings of France, and emperors of Germany, over those great vassals who held whole provinces, and singly or united often proved an overmatch for their sovereign.

Here ends the Mythic age. We shall pass over the next three, or according to most chronologers the next five centuries, which are but partially filled up by notices of events, such as the return of the Heraclidæ, the gradual subversion of monarchy throughout Greece, and the great emigrations which peopled the Asiatic coast with a Hellenic race. About the sixth century B.C. we begin to reap the benefit of contemporary authorities; and thenceforward history, if not free from an admixture of fiction, at least runs with a copious and uninterrupted stream.

* Thucyd. i. 9.



CHAPTER II.

Aristomenes.*—Hereward le Wake.—Wallace.

SPARTA had not long acquired strength under the institutions of Lycurgus, before she discovered that thirst of dominion which distinguished her after-history. The neighbouring state of Messenia was the first to suffer. As usual, it is hard to say which party gave the first provocation; but if the Lacedæmonians were ever in the right, they lost that advantage when, in time of peace, with studied secrecy they bound themselves never to return home until Messenia was conquered; and when, without the formality of a declaration of war, they stormed by night Ampheia, a frontier town, and put the unprepared inhabitants to the sword. Their enterprise succeeded better than its iniquity merited; for after a vigorous and protracted defence Messenia was subdued, and continued in servitude for forty years. At the end of that time a new race had grown up, ignorant of the evils of war, and too high-spirited to bear their degradation tamely. A gallant leader is seldom wanting to gallant men engaged in a good cause; and Aristomenes might serve as a type for all later heroes, whose exploits

* Pausanias evidently founded his account of Aristomenes upon the traditions and legendary ballads of the Messenians; which, probably, were about as historical as Chevy Chase, or the Spanish ballads of the Cid, and other celebrated warriors. The reader will be on his guard, therefore, against taking all that is here told for veracious history: but we have not attempted to discriminate accurately between truth and fiction, which would entirely destroy the spirit and romance of the narrative, very probably without coming nearer to the reality.

belong to the debateable ground which lies between truth and fiction. He was a young Messenian of the royal line, according to the report of his countrymen; but other Greeks, with a more unbounded admiration, related that the hero Pyrrhus,*-son of Achilles, was his father. His valour, at least, did not disgrace his reputed parentage; and, though daring in extremity even to desperation, was not of that blind and foolish kind which hurries unprepared into action, and sacrifices a good cause to the vanity and temerity of its supporters. Before taking the field, he secured the co-operation of Argos and Arcadia, to support and strengthen the eager spirit of his countrymen, and then, with a force entirely Messenian, attacked the Lacedæmonians at a place called Deræ. The event was doubtful; but that a conquered people should meet its masters in battle, and part from them on equal terms, was in itself equivalent to a victory. Aristomenes is said to have performed deeds beyond human prowess, and was rewarded by his grateful countrymen with a summons to the vacant throne. He declined the dignity, but accepted of the power under the title of commander-in-chief.

His next exploit was of a singular and romantic cast, such as would befit a knight of the court of Arthur, or

* Pausanias merely says that the Greeks in general believed Pyrrhus to be his father. We have no doubt, from the context, that the hero is the person meant, though the passage has been otherwise interpreted. The practice of deifying eminent men prevailed in Greece at an early period, though apparently not in the age of Hesiod and Homer. Homer is fond indeed of dwelling on the superiority of the past; a superiority referred to the celestial descent of the heroes who then flourished; but he gives us no reason to think that divine honours were paid them. In later times, a patron hero was as necessary to a Grecian, as a patron saint formerly to a European city: and there are few names of eminence in the heroic age, in honour of which temples have not been built, and sacred rites instituted. The twelve Athenian tribes had each its protecting hero: Æacus and his descendants were believed to preside over Ægina and Salamis. It is needless to multiply examples.

Charlemagne, or the less fabulous, but scarce less romantic era of Froissart, better than it assorts with modern notions of a general's or a sovereign's duties. Considering it important to alarm the Spartans, and impress them with a formidable idea of his personal qualities, he traversed Laconia, and entered Sparta by night, which, in obedience to Lycurgus' precepts, was unwall'd and unguarded, to suspend from the temple of Pallas a shield, inscribed "Aristomenes from the Spartan spoils dedicates this to the goddess."* Violence was not offered, and his object,

* Probably this story is founded on the theft of the Palladium by night from Troy, by Ulysses and Diomed. A similar spirit of chivalrous daring, mingled with superstition, suggested a similar enterprise to Fernando Perez del Pulgar, surnamed 'of the Exploits,' when serving at the siege of Granada under Ferdinand of Castile. "Who will stand by me," said he, "in an enterprise of desperate peril?" The Christian cavaliers well knew the hair-brained valour of del Pulgar, yet not one hesitated to step forward. He chose fifteen companions, all men of powerful arm and dauntless heart. In the dead of the night he led them forth from the camp, and approached the city cautiously, until he arrived at a postern gate, which opened upon the Darro, and was guarded by foot soldiers. The guards, little thinking of such an unwonted and partial attack, were for the most part fast asleep. The gate was forced, and a confused and chance medley skirmish ensued. Fernando stopped not to take part in the affray. Putting spurs to his horse, he galloped furiously through the streets, striking fire out of the stones at every bound. Arrived at the principal mosque, he sprang from his horse, and kneeling at the portal, took possession of the edifice as a Christian chapel, dedicating it to the blessed Virgin. In testimony of the ceremony, he took a tablet, which he had brought with him, on which was inscribed, in large letters, Ave Maria, and nailed it to the door of the mosque with his dagger. This done, he remounted his steed, and galloped back to the gate. The alarm had been given, the city was in an uproar; soldiers were gathering from every direction. They were astonished at seeing a Christian warrior speeding from the interior of the city. Fernando, overturning some and cutting down others, rejoined his companions, who still maintained possession of the gate by dint

therefore, must have been to win her favour, or at least to alarm the Spartans, lest their protecting deity should be wiled away. It is to be wished that we knew the result of this exploit, of which, unfortunately, no account remains. The year after the battle at Deræ, he again led his countrymen, supported by their allies, into battle, at a place called the Boar's Tomb; and if upon this occasion fortune favoured the rightful cause, it was again mainly owing to his personal exertions. Supported by a chosen band of eighty men, who gloried in the privilege of risking their lives by the side of Aristomenes, he attacked and broke in detail the choice infantry of Sparta, committing to others the task of routing a disordered enemy, himself ever present where they showed the firmest front; till the Lacedæmonians forgot the precepts of their lawgiver in a hasty flight. Their disorder was complete, but the pursuit was early stopped, either by the prudence of Aristomenes, or the promptitude with which the Spartans availed themselves of local advantages. The latter is probably the real meaning of the following legend. There lay a wild pear-tree in the track of the retreating army; Theoclus, the Messenian seer, warned Aristomenes not to urge the pursuit beyond this tree, for that Castor and Pollux, the tutelary deities of Lacedæmon, were perched upon it. But Aristomenes thought as little of his friend's advice, as Hector of Polydamas's warning not to attack the Grecian camp, and was still hard pressing upon the enemy, when suddenly his shield disappeared. The loss of this weapon was esteemed disgraceful, and therefore we can scarcely wonder that even

of hard fighting, and they all made good their retreat to the camp. The Moors were at a loss to conjecture the meaning of this wild and apparently fruitless assault, but great was their exasperation when, on the following day, they discovered the trophy of hardihood and prowess, the Ave Maria, thus elevated in the very centre of the city. The mosque, thus boldly sanctified by Fernando Perez del Pulgar, was eventually, after the capture of Granada, converted into a cathedral.—*Washington Irving, Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada*, chap. 91.

Aristomenes, whose character stood above detraction, should have lost time in a fruitless search, which, if improved to the full, might have broken for ever the power of his country's oppressor. So great was the loss and dismay of Sparta, that the war was kept alive with difficulty, and that only through the influence acquired by Tyrtaeus, who devoted his poetical talents to recruiting the courage and exasperating the hatred of the Lacedæmonians.*

The history of this man is somewhat singular. At the beginning of the war, the Lacedæmonians had been directed by the Delphic oracle to send to Athens for an adviser: they did so, and the city, unwilling either to aid in the aggrandizement of a rival, or to disobey the god, thought to extricate itself from the dilemma by making choice of one Tyrtaeus, an obscure schoolmaster, halt of one leg, and esteemed to be of mean ability. From the event, a Grecian would have argued in support of the favourite doctrine, that the decrees of fate were inevitable; for to the unknown talents of one so lightly valued did Sparta, upon this and other occasions, owe the favourable issue of the war.

But the reader may be curious to know the fate of Aristomenes' shield. Applying at Delphi, he was informed that he would find it in the cave of Trophonius,† at Lebadeia, in Bœotia, where he afterwards dedicated it,

* The spirit-stirring strains, which are said to have produced so wonderful an effect, are the dullest longs and shorts that ever were coupled together, if they are the same which have reached us under Tyrtaeus's name.

† A celebrated oracle; those who entered the cave are commonly said never to have smiled again. It appears, however, from Pausanias, that this loss of the important faculty which is said to distinguish men from brutes was only temporary. The method of consulting the oracle was singular. The aspirant descended into a cave, where was a small crevice, into which he proceeded to insinuate himself feet foremost. So soon as he had got his knees in, the whole body was sucked forwards by an overpowering force, and after passing through the circuit of the mysteries, he was ejected, feet foremost, at the place where he had entered.

“and I myself have seen it there,”* adds Pausanias, lest any doubt should attach to a story which seems to border somewhat on the marvellous. How it came there, we are left to conjecture: and in these days of scepticism and research, may well envy the historian whose readers’ incredulity was so easily overcome. But, with one or two brilliant exceptions, it was sufficient for the Greeks that a story passed current; they cared little to investigate probabilities, or enter upon long and intricate inquiries, which in modern times have been so successfully employed in disentangling the mingled web of truth and fiction. It is curious to mark the importance attached to this miraculous loss. Aristomenes thought it of sufficient consequence to render necessary an immediate journey to Delphi; for we find that, returning from Lebadeia, he renewed the war with his recovered shield, which therefore must have been dedicated at a later period. At first he confined himself to predatory incursions. Returning from “driving a creagh,” in Laconia, he was attacked and wounded, but repelled the assailants; and, on his recovery, projected an attack upon Sparta, which, under such a leader, might have been fatal to an unfortified and unwatched city; but was deterred a second time by the interposition of Castor and Pollux. Turning aside, therefore, to Carya, he carried off a band of Spartan maidens while engaged in a religious ceremony; and on this occasion he showed that a life of warfare had not deadened the kindlier feelings of his heart, by protecting them from the drunken intemperance of his soldiers, even to the death of some who persisted

* *Cade.* The elder of them, being put to nurse,
Was by a beggar-woman stolen away:
And, ignorant of his birth and parentage,
Became a bricklayer, when he came to age.
His son am I; deny it if you can.

Smith. Sir, he made a chimney in my father’s house,
and the bricks are alive to this day to testify it; therefore deny it not.

Henry VI. Part 2, Act iv., sc. 2.

in their disobedience. The captives, according to the custom of the age, were released upon ransom.

Another adventure terminated less happily, in which he attacked a quantity of matrons employed in celebrating the rites of Ceres, with similar views, but with a very different result. Armed only with spits and the implements of sacrifice, they showed the value of their Spartan breeding, animated by religious enthusiasm, in the entire defeat of the marauding party. Aristomenes, beaten down with their torches, was taken prisoner. This might have been an awkward and ill-sounding termination to a life of lofty adventure: many a hero has fallen victim to female wiles; but to be overcome and captured in open war by women armed with spits and staves, is an event not to be matched since the days of the Amazons, either in history or romance. The usual course of events, indeed, was inverted; for love was his deliverer from the dangers in which valour had involved him. Archidamia, the priestess of the goddess, who had been previously enamoured of him, forgot her patriotism, and set him free.

The Arcadians were zealous in the Messenian cause. Unhappily their prince, Aristocrates, proved treacherous, and took bribes from Sparta to betray his trust. "For the Lacedæmonians gave the first example of setting warlike prowess up to sale: prior to the transgression of Lacedæmon, and the treason of Aristocrates, combatants referred their cause to the arbitration of valour, and the fortune which Providence should allot to them. So also did they bribe the Athenian generals at Ægos-Potami:* but in the end the poisoned shaft recoiled upon themselves. It was through Persian gold, distributed at Corinth, Argos, Athens, Thebes, that the victorious career of Lacedæmon was stopped at its height, when, the Athenian fleet being destroyed, and a large part of Asia delivered, Agesilaus was compelled by the disturbances of Greece to lead home his victorious army. Thus

* We by no means pledge ourselves to the truth of this piece of secret history, which is not supported by the testimony of earlier authors.

did the gods turn to their own ruin the fraud which the Lacedæmonians had devised."* Aristocrates kept his own counsel, until the eve of the battle of Megaletaphrus (the great ditch), and then disseminated an opinion among his countrymen that their position was bad, and offered no means of retreat if they were worsted; and, moreover, that the omens were unfavourable: finally, he advised all to betake themselves to flight, so soon as he should give the word. The Arcadians were steady friends to the Messenians, yet, strange to say, they became the abettors of their prince's baseness, without sharing his reward. They formed the centre and left wing, and the consternation of the Messenians may be imagined, when two-thirds of their army at once deserted them. To complete his treachery, Aristocrates led the flying troops through the Messenians, and threw them into irretrievable confusion; forgetful of the battle, they betook themselves to expostulation and upbraiding of their treacherous allies; and the Lacedæmonians readily surrounded and defeated them with such slaughter, that from the hope of becoming lords of their former masters, they were reduced even to despair of safety. Aristomenes collected from all quarters the scattered remnant of his countrymen, into one new city which he founded on Mount Eira.

By this step they gave up all their territory, except a strip along the coast held by the Pyliaus and Methonæans. But they were not men to starve peaceably in the neighbourhood of full garners,

For why, the good old rule
Contented them; the simple plan
That they should take, who have the power,
And they should keep, who can:

and in truth circumstances fully justified them in adopting this simple and compendious rule of action, which they followed with no ordinary success, carrying off corn, wine, and cattle, equally from their own country, now occupied by Lacedæmonians, and from Laconia; and

* Pausanias, iv. 17.

providing for their other wants with the ransoms paid for men and moveables captured in their predatory excursions. At last the Spartans found out that it was worse than lost labour to sow, where an enemy was to reap; and forbade the cultivation, not only of Messenia, but even of the borders of Laconia. So great a sacrifice bespeaks the formidable nature of the enemy, and produced disturbances, in appeasing which the value of Tyrtæus was again displayed. The measure was highly politic, for it compelled the Messenians to gain their livelihood by long and dangerous excursions. In one of these Aristomenes, being surprised by a superior force, was stunned by a blow, and taken, with fifty of his comrades. Cruelty is almost the necessary consequence of injustice; and though the Messenians, and especially Aristomenes, seem always to have treated their prisoners with humanity, it was resolved to insure future quiet by sacrificing a man whose only crime was perseverance in his country's cause. The Spartans executed criminals by throwing them into a deep pit, called Ceada: into this Aristomenes and his companions were precipitated. All, except the hero, were killed by the fall, and he, reserved apparently for a more dreadful fate, retired to the extremity of the cavern, and for three days sat, his head wrapped in his cloak, in patient expectation of a lingering and painful death. At the end of that time he heard a slight noise, and raising his head (his eyes by this time had become accustomed to the gloom) perceived a fox gnawing the dead bodies. It might have occurred to a less ready wit, that where there is an entrance there may also be a way out; he caught the fox, and allowing it to follow its own path without suffering it to escape, was led along a dark passage, terminating in a crevice just large enough to admit the animal, through which a glimmering of light appeared. Dismissing his guide uninjured, he enlarged the opening with his hands, and against hope even, as well as probability, stood once more free to vindicate his country. It was of course supposed that a special providence, on this as on other occasions, guarded his safety; and many,

to magnify the wonder, asserted that an eagle interposed itself in the fall, and bore him down secure from all harm.

The whole event was considered marvellous: first, such was his lofty spirit, and renown in arms, that none believed Aristomenes would be taken alive; but his return from the bowels of the earth was still more amazing, and was held to be a manifest interposition of the Deity. The Lacedæmonians, indeed, refused to believe it, until the total destruction of a body of Corinthians marching to assist in the siege of Eira, "convinced them that Aristomenes, and no other of the Messenians, had done this."

After this occurrence he performed a second time a rite peculiar to the Messenians, called Hecatomphonia; a sacrifice offered to the Ithomæan* Jupiter, by such as had slain a hundred men in battle. He had celebrated it for the first time after the battle at the Boar's Tomb; the slaughter of the Corinthians gave him a second opportunity; and he is said to have offered it yet a third time. The Lacedæmonians now concluded a truce for forty days, that they might go home, to celebrate one of their great annual festivals. Aristomenes wandering abroad without suspicion during its continuance, was seized by seven Cretan bowmen, who, while the Spartans were feasting, amused themselves by traversing the country. Two of them set off to bear the news to Sparta: the others carried him to a neighbouring village, in which a girl dwelt, who, in a dream in the preceding night, had seen a lion brought thither in bonds, and deprived of claws, by wolves. She loosed it, the claws returned, and it destroyed its captors. When Aristomenes was brought in, and she heard his name, the interpretation of the dream flashed across her mind. She intoxicated the soldiers, and set him free; the treacherous Cretans fell an easy prey. In recompence for his life, he gave his preserver in marriage to his son Gorgus.

* Ithome was a strong town on Mount Ithome, now Vourkan, in which the Messenians made their last stand in the first war.

Such was the fortune of the war for ten years. After the destructive battle at Megalotaphrus, in the third year, when their cause was ruined by the defection of the Arcadians, Aristomenes and the seer Theoclus consulted the Delphic oracle concerning the fate of their country. The answer ran thus—

When the he-goat shall bend to drink where dimpling
Neda flows,
Messene's fate draws nigh ; no more can I avert her woes.

In the eleventh year of the siege of Eira, the fourteenth of the war, Theoclus, while walking along the bank of the river Neda, observed a wild fig-tree, which in the Messenian tongue was called by the same word which signifies a he-goat, that had grown slanting out of the bank, and then just swept the water with its branches. He brought Aristomenes to the place, and they agreed that the prophecy had received its fulfilment, and the hope of the nation was at an end. There were certain objects preserved in secret, and invested with peculiar sanctity, such as the Palladium enjoyed in Troy. If these were lost, the fortune of Messenia sunk with them for ever ; if not, ancient oracles foretold that the Messenians should again enjoy their own. Believing that the fated time had arrived, Aristomenes buried secretly the mystic treasure in the wildest and most desolate part of Mount Ithome ; in the persuasion that the deities, who had till then supported them in a righteous struggle, would still watch over the mysterious pledge of their safety.*

Pausanias seems to take a malicious pleasure in observing that Eira, no less than Troy, owed its ruin to a woman. A herdsman, belonging to Emperamus, a Spartan of distinction, had fled from his master, and

* When the Messenians were restored by Epaminondas, the locality of this deposit was indicated by a dream. It was found to consist of a tin plate beaten thin, and folded into the shape of a book, upon which were engraved the rites and doctrines of the Eleusinian mysteries.—*Pausanias*, iv. 26.

lived near the river Neda. He gained the affections of a Messenian woman, who dwelt without the walls of Eira, and used to visit her when her husband was on guard. One night, the husband's sudden return compelled him to conceal himself: a storm of extraordinary violence had caused the guard to disperse, trusting that the inclement season would keep the Lacedæmonians quiet, and aware that Aristomenes could not go the rounds, according to his custom, since he was lying ill of a recent wound. The herdsman listened to this account, and perceived that it was a favourable opportunity for making his peace, and even securing reward. He hastened to Emperamus, his master, who was in command at the camp, narrated what had happened, and conducted the army to the assault. The way was difficult, and the night terrible, but they surmounted these impediments, and entered the town before the alarm was given. Taken by surprise, its devoted inhabitants still acted up to the reputation they had so deservedly acquired. Aristomenes and Theoclus, aware that Messenia at length must fall, yet concealed the fulfilment of the oracle, and roused the courage of their comrades to desperation: even the women showed that they preferred death to captivity, and excited the men to higher daring by the participation of their danger. The night passed without advantage to either party, but at day-break the rain poured down in still greater fury, and drove in the faces of the Messenians; and the lightning flashing from the left, an evil omen, at once blinded them and depressed their spirits, while to the Spartans it came from the right, and was welcomed as the harbinger of success. The latter too were far superior in number; but since they could not avail themselves of this advantage in the narrow streets, their general sent back a part to the camp to rest and refresh themselves, with orders to return in the evening, to relieve that division which remained. Pressed thus continually by fresh foes, the wretched Messenians yet protracted the struggle. Three days and three nights they maintained an unceasing fight; at the end of these, watching, and cold, and wet, and thirst, and hunger, had

exhausted their strength. Then Theoclus addressed Aristomenes: "Why do we still maintain this fruitless labour? The decree has gone forth that Messene must fall: that which we now see was foretold to us long since by the priestess of Apollo, and the fig-tree lately warned us that the time was at hand. God grants to me a common end with my country: it is your part to preserve the Messenians and yourself." He rushed among the enemy, exclaiming, "Ye shall not rejoice in the possessions of the Messenians for ever!" and, sated with slaughter, fell surrounded by the victims of his despair. Aristomenes collected the survivors into a close column, in the centre of which he placed their wives and children, and stationing himself with his chosen band at their head, motioned with his spear to the enemy to allow them a free passage; which the Spartans granted, rather than exasperate their well-tried intrepidity to frenzy. They found a hospitable and friendly reception in Arcadia, the inhabitants of which supplied their wants, and would willingly have assigned to them a portion of their lands; but the ardent spirit of Aristomenes could not brook a quiet submission. Selecting five hundred men, the flower of his army, he asked if they were prepared to die with him in their country's behalf; and having received their hearty concurrence, proposed a scheme for surprising Sparta, and holding it as a pledge for their own restoration. Three hundred Arcadians volunteered to join him; but their hopes were frustrated a second time by the traitor Aristocrates. On this occasion, however, he was detected, and his former villany being at the same time revealed, the Arcadians, in just anger, stoned him to death. The Messenians, exhorted to join in the punishment, looked to Aristomenes, who sat weeping, and in imitation of their beloved leader, abstained from sharing in a merited revenge. Tender by nature must have been the heart of one, who, after having slain three hundred men with his own hand, could yet weep over the deserved punishment of an old companion in arms; and it is pleasing to contrast the staunch patriotism of the Messenians, still tempered by moderation and mercy,

with the savage and wanton cruelties acted by the polished Greeks of later ages.

The Pylians and Methonæans, who had preserved their navy, invited their countrymen in Arcadia to join them, and seek a settlement in some foreign land. Aristomenes refused to accept the proffered command; he would never cease, he said, to war against the Lacedæmonians, and well knew that he should ever be the cause of some evil to them. His son Gorgus, and Manticlus, son of Theoclus, supplied his place. Ere they had resolved on their course, Anaxilas, prince of Rhegium, sent to invite their co-operation in a war against the Zancleæans, promising, in case of success, to assign to them that wealthy city. Zancle soon fell before their joint efforts. Anaxilas wished to slay the male citizens, and reduce their families to slavery; but the Messenians had learnt pity in the school of adversity, and deprecated being made the instruments of inflicting upon others the miseries which they themselves deplored. Interchanging oaths of fidelity with the inhabitants, they dwelt in union with them in the city, to which, in memory of their beloved country, they gave the name of Messene, which it bears to this day, under the slightly altered form of Messina.*

Shortly after their departure, Damagetus, king of Ialysus, in Rhodes, inquiring at Delphi where he should seek a wife, was directed to choose the daughter of the best of the Grecians. He hesitated not to fix on Aristomenes, and took his youngest and only unmarried child. The warrior passed with her into Rhodes, and died soon

* We have retained this story in the text for its intrinsic beauty, and regret being obliged to say that it is entirely false. It has been shown by Bentley to be inconsistent with Herodotus and Thucydides, and is tacitly rejected by Clinton. Zancle was taken by the Samians, B.C. 494, at the suggestion of Anaxilas, tyrant of Rhegium; who afterwards expelled the Samians, and filling the city with men of various nations, called it Messene, being himself of Messenian descent.

after, ungratified in his wish of striking another blow at Lacedæmon. He was honoured with a splendid monument, and worshipped as a hero in Rhodes, and by his grateful countrymen.

Such of the Messenians as remained on the land were consigned to the miserable class of Helots. But even in this degraded state they were still a source of trouble to their masters ; and at last revolting, made so obstinate a defence, that they obtained permission to depart unarmed, and were settled by the Athenians at Naupactus, on the Corinthian gulf. Two centuries after their subjection, Epaminondas collected the scattered remnants of the people, and re-established them in possession] of their country, in a new city, named Messene, built under his patronage, on Mount Ithome. Thus ancient oracles were fulfilled, the tutelary deities preserved their trust, and the dying prophecy of Theoclus was accomplished.

The annals of the Norman conquest of England introduce us to a fit companion for Aristomenes, in respect of similarity of fortunes, as well as character. Hereward le Wake, a youth of noble Saxon family, while yet a boy was distinguished for strength and turbulence of character : so rough was he in play, that his hand was against every one, and every one's hand against him ; and so impatient of superiority, that if the prize of wrestling, or their other games, was awarded to another, he would assert his own title by the cogent argument of an appeal to the sword. His father's love of quiet seems to have been greater than his parental affection, for he took upon himself the task of ridding the neighbourhood of his troublesome son, and set forth so ably his violences against others, and certain boyish impertinences committed against himself, that he obtained from Edward the Confessor an order for his banishment. Hereward went to Northumberland, and thence travelling to Cornwall, Ireland, and Flanders, he distinguished himself everywhere so highly, for daring, skill in arms, and success in extricating himself from the greatest dangers, that it was a doubt whether his courage or his good fortune were the more admirable. His fame, won in many a conflict, and confirmed even by the report

of his enemies, was not long in reaching England ; and so entirely changed the temper of father, mother, relations, and friends, that the worthy abbot of Croyland, from whom our narrative is taken, can only account for the sudden conversion of so much ill will into such violent affection, by attributing it to the special interposition of Providence.

During his abode in Flanders, he received news of the Norman invasion, of his father's death, and the bestowal of his inheritance upon a Norman, who insulted and oppressed his widowed mother. Hastening to avenge her, he quickly expelled the spoiler ; and then remembering that he was no knight himself, though knights were now under his command, he received the order from his uncle the Abbot of Peterborough. For the English considered the investiture as a religious ceremony, and whoever underwent it confessed himself, received absolution, and spent the eve of his consecration in prayer in the church. In the morning, after hearing mass, he offered his sword upon the altar ; and after the gospel had been read the priest blessed the weapon, and completed the ceremony by laying it upon his shoulder. But the Normans, who looked upon the order as exclusively military, held in abomination this method of receiving it.*

A body of noble Saxons, who, like Hereward, had been expelled from their inheritances, or driven by maltreatment into rebellion, occupied the Isle of Ely, a tract then environed by morasses, which now have almost disappeared, and admirably fitted to be a place of refuge from a more powerful but less active enemy. They chose Hereward for their leader, and he justified their preference and his own reputation by a series of exploits,

* Ingulph, *Hist. Croyland*. In later times the ceremony seems to have been universally religious :—see, for example, the dubbing of Don Quixote. We cannot doubt, however, but that Ingulph knew the practice of his own times. Probably the Normans, whose conversion to Christianity was not of very old standing, still retained a flavour of heathenism.

which continued long after to be favourite subjects of the popular ballads ; for the preservation of some of which posterity would have owned a much greater obligation to Ingulph, than for the minute details connected with the monastery of Croyland, which he has thought it more important to preserve.

Upon his uncle's death the abbey of Peterborough was bestowed by the Conqueror upon a Norman, by name Thorold, to Hereward's great displeasure. In conjunction with the Danes, who then infested the eastern coast, he resolved to disturb the temporal enjoyments at least of the intruder. Let the Monk of Peterborough tell his own melancholy history.

“ Early in the morning of the above-mentioned day, came the aforesaid evil doers, with many ships ;* but the monks and their men shut the gates, and bestirred themselves manfully in their defence from above, so that the battle waxed very sore at the gate called Bulehithe.† Then Hereward and his comrades, seeing they could by no means gain the mastery, and force entrance, set fire to the houses near the gate, and so made passage by burning ; also, they consumed all the offices of the monks, save the church and one house. Yet the monks met them, and besought that they would not do this evil ; but they listened not, and went armed into the church, and would have carried away the great crucifix, but they could not. Nevertheless they took from its head a golden crown set with jewels, and a stool, also made of pure gold and jewels, from under its feet ; also two golden reliquaries, and nine made of silver, fashioned with gold and jewels, and twelve crosses, some made of gold, others of silver, gold, and jewels. Nor did this content them,

* It is interesting to trace the physical changes of the island ; the formidable swamps above mentioned are now converted into the richest land in England, and we doubt whether Peterborough, or Lincoln, then a centre of trade and commerce, be now accessible to any vessel more dignified than a coal-barge or an eight-oared cutter.

† “ Now (A.D. 1692) Bulldyke Gate, on the south side of the monastery.”—*Gibson's Saxon Chronicle*.

but they went up into the tower, and took thence a great table made entirely of gold and gems and silver, which the monks had hidden there, which used to stand before the altar; and they took such a quantity of gold and silver in articles of all sorts, books, and ornaments, as can neither be told nor valued. All these were of the best quality, nor did the like of them remain in England. Yet they said that out of fealty to the church they did thus, and that the Danes would preserve those valuables for the use of the church, better than the Normans. And, indeed, Hereward himself was of a monastic order, and therefore they put some trust in him, and he afterwards made oath that he had done this from good motives, because he thought they should conquer King William, and themselves possess the land.

“So it came to pass that nothing that was taken away was ever restored, and the monastery, which had been so rich, was now reduced to poverty. And from that day nothing was ever added or restored to it, but its wealth continually diminished. Since Abbot Thorold himself not only added nothing, but dispersed its compact estates among his kinsmen and the knights that came with him.”*

The Abbot gave away sixty-two knights' fees (feoda) upon tenure of military service. Not long after, being naturally anxious to dislodge so formidable an enemy, he summoned his friends and vassals to drive Hereward from the vicinity. Ivo Tailboys, a Norman baron, to whom the Conqueror had granted the district of Hoyland, or Holland, in Lincolnshire, still known by the latter name, entered the woods at the head of his troops: the Abbot, with other dignitaries, kept warily on the outside; but while Ivo entered upon the right, Hereward darted round upon the left, carried off the Abbot and his companions, and made them pay a ransom of three thousand marks. At length William in person brought a powerful army against him, beleaguered the island closely by land and water, and, at vast expense, proceeded to make causeways

* Hugo Candidus.

across the marshes, by which his position was defended. Ivo Tailboys was a great believer in witchcraft, and he prevailed upon the king to try its efficacy. As the causeway proceeded, therefore, a witch was kept in advance, in a wooden turret, to fulminate her incantations against the enemy : but the farce soon met with a tragical conclusion, for Hereward, watching his time when the soldiers and workmen had gone somewhat forward, made a circuit, and by setting fire to the reeds upon their flank, involved soldiers, witch, and works, in one common ruin. But the odds were overwhelming, and at last the Saxons were compelled to submit. The other chiefs, including some of the most noble of the land, surrendered to the conqueror's mercy, and suffered death, mutilation, or fine, according to the sense entertained by him of their guilt. Hereward alone, by his superior gallantry and conduct, provided for the escape of his followers and himself, and was ultimately rewarded for his valour and perseverance, by being admitted to favour, and reinstated in his paternal estates. He finished his days in peace, and was buried in Croyland Abbey.

But British history offers another character to our notice, who bears perhaps a nearer personal resemblance to Aristomenes, although both his own fate and the issue of the struggle in which he engaged were different,—Wallace, the earliest, the stoutest, and the most fondly remembered champion of Scottish independence : whose name has been preserved and magnified in the recollection of his countrymen, with an affection not inferior to that which led the Messenians to pay divine honours to their departed hero. The fame of both rests chiefly upon tradition, for the earliest Scottish author who gives the history of Wallace wrote more than a century after his death, and the notices of his exploits in the English chroniclers are meagre and unsatisfactory. It is impossible therefore accurately to depict his character, or to draw the line minutely between truth and fiction. We see a form of commanding and colossal proportions, but we see it dimly, and the features must be filled up from our own imaginations : but we may at least trace indom-

itable courage, constancy, and patriotism; and if these lofty qualities were sometimes sullied by ferocity, yet, in justification of the sympathy and interest which his career excites, we may plead not only the character of the age, and the sufferings endured by Scotland under the English yoke, but the exacerbation of temper which must necessarily arise from a life of constant hardship and danger. Hunted continually from morass to forest, denied the enjoyment of domestic happiness, dependent upon his own right hand for the security which was to be found only in the death of his pursuers, it is rather matter for regret, than for stern censure, if in the hour of victory the call of mercy was unheeded. And in further extenuation we may add, that to control the excesses of his followers does not seem always to have been in the power even when it was in the wish of their chief; and that it is reasonable and consistent with the bitter spirit of national enmity which long prevailed, to conjecture that the blind minstrel, who is his principal biographer, consulted the passions and prejudices of his hearers no less by exaggerating the deeds of vengeance acted by his hero, than his hair-breadth escapes, and almost superhuman might.

It is amusing to note how party spirit has biassed the view taken of his origin and motives. The English writers speak of him slightingly, without notice of the extraordinary qualities ascribed to him, as a common robber, who having by degrees collected round him a large band of desperate men, was emboldened to attack and plunder the suite of Ormesby, chief justiciary of Scotland. Compare this with the account given by Bower,* in whose eyes, it is but fair to say, the having fought stoutly in defence of Scotland was cloak enough to cover a multitude of offences.

“In the same year (1297) that famous warrior William Wallace, the hammer and the scourge of the English, son of a noble knight of the same name, lifted up

* Bower continued the *Scotichronicon* of Fordun. The whole work is usually quoted under the latter name.

his head ; and when he saw the affliction of his nation, and the goods of the Scots delivered into the hands of their enemies, his heart pined and was sore afflicted. For he was tall of stature, gigantic in body, of calm aspect, and cheerful countenance, broad shouldered, big boned, proportionately corpulent, pleasant, yet stern to behold, thick loined, powerful of limb, a most stout champion, and very strong, and well knit in all his joints. Moreover the Most High had so distinguished him by a certain prepossessing mirthfulness, had so graced with some heavenly gift both his deeds and words, that by his mere aspect he disposed the hearts of all true Scots to love him. And no wonder, for he was most generous, in judgment most just, in ministering comfort most patient, in council most wise, in sufferance most enduring, in speech most eloquent : above all things hostile to lies and falsehood, and abhorrent of treachery : wherefore the Lord was with him, through whom he was in all things prosperous, venerating the church, revering churchmen, supporting the poor and widowed, cherishing orphans, raising the oppressed, lying in wait for thieves and robbers, and without reward inflicting deserved punishment upon them."

The following extract comprises such particulars of his early career as seem entitled to historical credit. "At this time (1297), and out of this middle class of the lesser barons, arose an extraordinary individual, who was at first driven into the field by intolerable injury and despair, and who in a short period of time, in the reconquest of his native country, developed a character which may without exaggeration be termed heroic. This was William Wallace, or Walays, the second son of Sir Malcolm Wallace, of Ellersley, near Paisley, a simple knight, whose family was ancient, but neither rich nor noble. In those days bodily strength and knightly prowess were of the highest consequence in commanding respect and ensuring success. Wallace had an iron frame. His make, as he grew up to manhood, approached almost to the gigantic, and his personal strength was superior to the common run of even the strongest men. His passions were hasty and violent ;

a strong hatred to the English, who now insolently lorded it over Scotland, began to show itself at a very early period of his life; and this aversion was fostered in the youth by an uncle, a priest, who, deploring the calamities of his country, was never weary of extolling the sweets of liberty and the miseries of dependence.

“The intrepid temper of Wallace appears first to have shown itself in a quarrel with one of the English officers, who insulted him. Provoked by his taunts, Wallace, reckless of the consequences, stabbed him with his dagger, and slew him on the spot. The consequence of this was to him the same as to many others, who at this time preferred a life of dangerous freedom to the indulgence and security of submission. He was proclaimed a traitor, banished his home, and driven to seek his safety in the wilds and fastnesses of his country. It was here that he collected by degrees a little band, composed at first of a few brave men of desperate fortunes who had forsworn their vassalage to their lords, and refused submission to Edward, and who at first carried on that predatory warfare against the English, to which they were impelled as well by the desire of plunder, and the necessity of subsistence, as by the love of liberty. These men chose Wallace for their chief. Superior rank, for as yet none of the nobility or barons had joined them, his uncommon courage and personal strength, and his unconquerable thirst of vengeance against the English, naturally influenced their choice, and the result proved how well it had fallen. His plans were laid with so much judgment, that in his first attacks against straggling parties of the English, he was generally successful; and if surprised by unexpected numbers, his superior strength and bravery, and the noble ardour with which he inspired his followers, enabled them to overpower every effort which was made against them.

“To him these early and desultory excursions against the enemy were highly useful; as he became acquainted with the strongest passes of his country, and acquired habits of command over men of fierce and turbulent spirits. To them the advantage was reciprocal, for they

began gradually to feel an undoubting confidence in their leader; they were accustomed to rapid marches, to endure fatigue and privation, to be on their guard against surprise, to feel the effects of discipline and obedience, and by the successes which these ensured, to regard with contempt the nation by whom they had allowed themselves to be overcome.

“The consequences of these partial advantages over the enemy were soon seen. At first few had dared to unite themselves to so desperate a band. But confidence came with success, and numbers flocked to the standard of revolt. The continued oppressions of the English, the desire of revenge, and even the romantic and perilous nature of the undertaking recruited the ranks of Wallace, and he was soon at the head of a great body of Scottish exiles.”*

About this time he was joined by Sir William Douglas at the head of all his vassals. A series of brilliant successes followed the union of their little armies: and such was the effect produced on the public mind, that when their united strength broke in upon the West of Scotland, they were joined by some of the most powerful of the Scottish nobles, among whom we find the Steward of Scotland, Sir Andrew Moray of Bothwell, his brother, and Wishart, Bishop of Glasgow.

Such is the outset of Wallace's career, so far as it is matter of authentic history. His biographer, Blind Harry, carries him through a great number of adventures before this period; but they possess so little of interest or poetical merit, and are written in such antiquated language, that the reader would probably derive little pleasure from them. They consist chiefly of rencontres with the English soldiery; enterprising attacks upon the strongholds scattered throughout Scotland, and the various events of a desultory and almost predatory warfare, in all which his knightly prowess and sagacity are represented as compensating for inferiority in numbers, and as extricating his followers and himself even in the

* Tytler, History of Scotland, vol. i.

extremity of danger. The following specimens will probably be sufficient.

The first relates to the surprisal of Dunbarton Castle. Wallace, entering the town, found the captain and part of his garrison drinking, and bragging of what they would do if the rebel leader and his men were within reach.

When Wallace heard the Southron made sic din,
 He garred all bide, and him alane went in ;
 The lave^a remained, to hear of their tithans,^b
 He saluit them with sturdy countenance.
 " Fellows," he said, " sen I come last fra hame
 In travail I was our land, and uncouth fame.
 Fra south Ireland I come in this countree,
 The new conquest of Scotland for to see.
 Part of your drink, or some good would I have."
 The captain then a shrewish answer him gave ;
 " Thou seemest a Scot unlikely, us to spy ;
 Thou may be ane of Wallace company.
 Contrar our king he is risen again,
 The land of Fife he has rademyt in playne.^c
 Thou sall here bide, while we wit how it be ;
 Be thou of his, thou sall be hanged on high."
 Wallace then thought it was no time to stand,
 His noble sword he grippit soon in hand ;
 Athwart his face drew that captain in tene,^d
 Strake all away that stood abowne his eyne ;
 Ane othir braithly in the breast he bare,
 Baith brawn and bayn,^e the burly blade through share ;
 The lave rushed up to Wallace in great ire ;
 The third he felled full fiercely in the fire.
 Stenyn of Ireland and Kerle, in that thrang,
 Kepynt na charge, but entred them amang ;
 And othir more that to the door can press :
 While they saw him, there could no man them cess,^f
 The Southron men full soon were brought to dead.

The following extract is of a more romantic character. Wallace, being closely pursued by the English, had, in a mingled fit of anger and suspicion, struck off the head of

^a Remainder. ^b Tidings. ^c Recovered entirely.
^d In anger. ^e Bone. ^f Stop.

one of his followers, by name Fawdoun. At night, when he and his men had taken refuge in a tower, they heard a horn blown at hand. Two of them went out to see what the cause might be; they did not return, and the horn was again heard louder than before. Two more were sent, and so, till Wallace was left alone.

When he alane Wallace was leavit there,
 The awfull blast abounded mickle mair.
 Then trowed he they had his lodging seen;
 His sword he drew, of noble metal keen,
 Syne^s forth he went whereat he heard the horn.
 Without the door Fawdoun was them beforne,
 As till his sight, his awn head in his hand.
 A cross he made, when he saw him so stand.
 At Wallace in the head he swaket^h there;
 And he in haste soon hyntⁱ it by the hair,
 Syne out again at him he couth^j it cast;
 Intil his heart he greatly was aghast.
 Right well he trowed that was no sprite of man,
 It was some devil, that sic malice began.
 He wist no waill^k there longer for to byde.
 Up through the hall thus wight Wallace can glide,
 Till a close stair: the boards rave in twain.
 Fifteen foot large he lap out of that inn.^l
 Up the water suddenly he couth fare;
 Again he blent^m what perance he saw there.
 Him thought he saw Fawdoun, that hugly sir;
 That haill hall he had set in a fire;
 A great rafter he had intill his hand.
 Wallace as then no longer would he stand.
 Of his gude men full great merveill had he,
 How they were lost through his fell fantasy.

In the spring of 1297 his career of victory was checked at Irvine, by the dissensions and desertion of his army; but the cloud soon passed away, for in the autumn we find him engaged in the siege of Dundee, from which he was recalled by the approach of the English, under the com-

^s Then. ^h Cast forcibly. ⁱ Caught.
^j Could. ^k Knew of no advantage.
^l Abiding place. ^m Glanced.

mand of Warenne, Earl of Surrey. Wallace determined to await the enemy on the banks of the Forth, near Stirling, where the river could be crossed only by a narrow and inconvenient bridge, that scarce admitted the passage of two horsemen together. The Scottish army consisted of forty thousand foot, and one hundred and eighty horse; the English, of fifty thousand foot, and one thousand horse.

Surrey was probably aware of the strong position occupied by the Scots, and the danger of passing the bridge in face of the enemy, for he despatched two friars to propose terms to Wallace. "That robber," says Hemingford, "replied, 'Tell your fellows, that we come not hither for the benefit of peace, but are prepared for battle, to avenge and to free our kingdom. Let them, therefore, come up when they will, and they shall find us ready to meet them beard to beard.' And when these tidings came to our men, they that were hot-headed said, 'Let us go up against them, for these are but threats.' But the wiser part added, 'We may not yet advance, until we have well reflected what counsel to pursue.' Then said that stout knight, Sir Richard Lundy, who had surrendered to us at Irvine,* 'My lords, if it shall be that we ascend the bridge, we are dead men. For we can only pass by two and two, and the enemy are on our flank, and when they please, will form in line and charge us. But not far off there is a ford where sixty men can cross at once. Now then give me five hundred horse and a small body of foot; and we will make a circuit in the enemy's rear and overthrow him: and meanwhile you, Lord Earl, and your company will pass the bridge in safety.' But they would not abide by his good counsel, saying that it was unsafe to separate. So being divided in opinion, some cried out to pass the bridge, others the contrary. Among whom Cressingham, the king's treasurer, a proud man and a child of perdition, said, 'It is not well, my Lord Earl, to put off this matter farther,

* A town in Ayrshire, where many of the insurgents had submitted a short time before.

and to spend the king's money in vain. Rather let us march up, and do our devoir as we are bound.' The earl, therefore, being moved by his words, gave orders that they should pass the bridge. A strange thing was it, and very direful in its issue, that so many, and such wise men, who knew the enemy to be at hand, should venture on a narrow bridge, which two horsemen could hardly pass abreast. So that, as some said, who were in that battle, if they had filed over without bar or hindrance from break of day till eleven o'clock, still a large part of the rear would have remained behind. Neither was there a fitter place in all Scotland to deliver over the English to the Scots, or the many into the hands of the few. The banners of the king and earl passed over, and among the first that most valiant knight, Sir Marmaduke Twenge. And when the enemy saw that as many as they thought to overthrow had crossed, they ran down the hill, and blocked up the bridge end with their spear-men; so that from thenceforth there was neither passage nor return, but in the attempt many were cast over the bridge and drowned. As the Scots came down from the mountain, Sir Marmaduke said, 'Is it not time, my brethren, to charge them?' And they assented, and spurred their horses: and in the shock some of the Scots horsemen fell, and the others, to a man, ran away. As our men pursued the fugitives, one said to Sir Marmaduke, 'Sir, we are betrayed, for our comrades do not follow, and the banners of the king and earl are not to be seen.' Then looking back, they saw that many of our men, and among them the standard-bearers, had fallen, and said, 'Our way to the bridge is cut off, and we are barred from our friends: it is better to make trial of the water, if it be that we may pass it, than to plunge into the columns of the enemy, and fall to no purpose. It is difficult, yea, impossible, for us to pass through the midst of the Scots.' Then replied that valiant knight, Sir Marmaduke, 'Surely, my dear friends, it shall never be said of me, that I drowned myself for nothing. Do not ye so either, but follow me, and I will clear a passage through them even to the bridge.' Then spurring his charger, he plunged

among the enemy, and dealing blows on either side, passed unhurt through the throng, and laid open a wide path for his followers. For he was tall, and stout of body. And as he fought thus valiantly, his nephew, who was wounded, his horse being slain, shouted after him, 'Sir, save me.' He replied, 'Get up behind me.'—'I cannot,' he answered, 'for my strength is gone.' Presently his comrade, an esquire of the same Sir Marmaduke, came up, and descending from his horse, he placed the young man on it, and said to his master, 'Sir, go where you will, I follow ;' and he followed him to the bridge, so that both were preserved. All who remained, to the number of one hundred horsemen, and five thousand foot, perished, except a few who swam the river. One knight, also, with much difficulty, passed the water upon his barded horse." *

The Earl of Surrey quitted the field as soon as he was rejoined by Twenge, giving orders for the destruction of the bridge. The Scots, therefore, did not cross to pursue their success : but notwithstanding, quantities of plunder fell into their hands, and the decisive nature of the defeat is evident from the consequences which attended it. In the words of Knighton, "This awful beginning of hostilities roused the spirit of Scotland, and sunk the hearts of the English." In a short time not a fortress of Scotland remained in Edward's possession. The castles of Edinburgh and Roxburgh were dismantled, and Berwick, being abandoned by the English upon the advance of the Scots, was occupied by Wallace, who resolved on an immediate expedition into England, with the view of providing sustenance for his troops, and lightening the horrors of famine, which now fell severely upon Scotland.

"After that ill-omened beginning," Hemingford continues, "the Scots were animated, and the hearts of the English troubled. Wallace overran and devastated the whole of Northumberland. In that time the praise

* Hemingford, Hist. Edw. I., ed. Hearne, p. 126-9. Barded, clad in armour as well as his rider.

of God ceased to be heard in all monasteries and churches from Newcastle-upon-Tyne to Carlisle. For all monks, canons, and other priests, with all the commons, fled before the face of the Scots." Turning then westward, he passed Carlisle, which refused to surrender, ravaged Cumberland, and was advancing into Durham, when his progress was stopped by the winter's setting in with unusual severity : a deliverance ascribed to the miraculous assistance of Cuthbert, the patron saint of the diocese. " Returning to Hexham, where stood a wealthy monastery, which the Scots had plundered on their advance, three canons of that house, who, having no fear of death, had just returned, fled into an oratory which they had rebuilt, that, if it were the Divine will, they might there be offered as a sacrifice of sweet savour. Presently the spearmen came in and shook their lances over them, saying, ' Show us the treasures of your church, or ye shall instantly die.' One of them replied, ' It is not long since you and your people carried off our property, as if it had been your own, and you know where you have placed it. Since then we have sought out a few things, as you now see.' Meanwhile Wallace appeared and rebuked his men, and bid them give way, and asked one of the monks to celebrate mass, which was done. And at the moment of elevating the host, Wallace went forth to lay aside his armour ; and then, when the priest was about to take the holy sacrament, the Scots gathered round him, to snatch away the cup. And after Wallace had washed his hands, and returned from the sacristy to the altar, he found the chalice and the napkins, and other ornaments of the altar, carried off ; even the book in which the mass had been begun, was gone. And while the priest was hesitating what he should do, Wallace returned, and seeing what had passed, he gave order that those sacrilegious men should be sought out, and put to death. But they were not found, inasmuch as they were not sought for in earnest. And he said to the canons, ' Go not away from me, but keep near me, as you value your safety. For this

people is ill-disposed, and may neither be excused nor punished.' ”*

Soon after his return from this expedition, he was elected governor of Scotland, and his measures in this high office appear to have been judicious and temperate. But the haughty barons could not bear the superiority of one whose only claim was in his merit, and thus division was sown in the Scottish councils at the time when unanimity was more than ever needed. In the summer of 1298 Edward himself invaded Scotland at the head of a powerful army. The plan adopted by Wallace upon this occasion was the same as that which was afterwards so successfully executed by Bruce. He avoided a general battle, which with an army far inferior to the English must have been fought to a disadvantage, —he fell back slowly before the enemy, leaving some garrisons in the most important castles, driving off all supplies, wasting the country through which the English were to march, and waiting till the scarcity of provisions compelled them to retreat, and gave him a favourable opportunity of breaking down upon them with full effect.†

* Hemingford, Hist. Edw. I., ed. Hearne, p. 134.

† His system of war is embodied in some monkish Latin verses called ‘The Bruce’s Testament,’ of which the following is an old Scottish translation :—

On fut suld be all Scottis weire,
 Be hyll and moss thaimself to weire,
 Lat wod for wallis be ; bow, and spier,
 And battle-axe, their fechtig gear.
 That ennymeis do thaim na dreire
 In strait placis gar keip all stoire,
 And birnen the planen land thaim befoire.
 Thanan sall they pass away in haist
 Quhen that thai find nothing bot waist ;
 With wyles and wakenen of the nycht,
 And mekil noyse maid on hycht ;
 Thanen shall thai turnen with gret affrai
 As thai were chasit with swerd away.
 This is the counsall and intent
 Of gud King Robert’s testament.

They advanced unopposed, therefore, but found an inhospitable desert; and Edward, unable to replace his exhausted stores, was at length compelled to issue orders for a retreat to Edinburgh, hoping to meet his fleet at Leith, and then to recommence offensive warfare. At this critical juncture, when the military skill and wisdom of the dispositions made by Wallace became apparent, and when the moment to harass and destroy the invading army in its retreat had arrived, the treachery of her nobles again betrayed Scotland to the enemy. Two Scottish lords, Patrick, Earl of Dunbar, and the Earl of Angus, at day-break privately sought the quarters of the Bishop of Durham, and informed him that the Scots were encamped not far off in the forest of Falkirk. The Scottish earls, who dreaded the resentment of Edward on account of their late renunciation of allegiance, did not venture to seek the king in person. They sent their intelligence by a page, and added, that having heard of his projected retreat, it was the intention of Wallace to surprise him by a night attack. Edward, on hearing this welcome news, could not conceal his joy. "Thanks be to God," he exclaimed, "who hitherto hath extricated me from every danger. They shall not need to follow me, since I shall forthwith go and meet them."*

The consequence of this treachery was the fatal battle of Falkirk, in which the Scots were totally defeated, with vast slaughter, owing to the jealousy and dissensions of the nobility; and Wallace, finding his own exertions thwarted, resigned his office.

"Beside the watyre of Forth, he
 Forsook Wardane ever to be.
 For lever^a he had to lyve simply.
 Na under sic doubt in Seigniory.
 Na the leal comonys of Scotland
 He wold not had peryst under his hand.
 "Of his good deeds, and manhood
 Gret Gestis, I hard say, are made.

* Tytler, vol. i.

^a Rather.

But sa mony I trow not
 As he intil hys dayis wroucht.
 Wha all his Dedis of price wald dyte
 Him worthyd a gret Book to wryte
 And all thae to wryte in here
 I want both wyt and good laysere.”*

For several years after this, we do not meet with his name in the records of authentic history. The blind minstrel transports him to France during this period, where he goes through many adventures, and, among others, kills a lion in single combat. But we must hasten to the closing scene of his life. After Edward had overrun and subjected the whole country in 1303, all others who had distinguished themselves in the war were admitted to pardon upon terms more or less hard. “As for William Wallace,” says the deed, “it is covenanted, that if he thinks proper to surrender himself, it must be unconditionally to the will and mercy of our lord the king.” To accept such terms was to deliver himself over to death; he therefore betook himself to the woods and mountains, and lived upon plunder.

It is amusing to trace the effects of national partiality in the contradictory accounts of the Scottish and English historians. Bower tells us that Wallace’s friends endeavoured to induce him to submit, upon the same terms as themselves; and that Edward was so anxious upon this head, that he offered, not only personal security, but an earldom, with ample domains, to be selected, by himself, either in Scotland or England, as the price of his allegiance. But Wallace answered, that if every other Scot should submit, still he and his companions would stand up for the freedom of the kingdom; and never, as they hoped for God’s favour, obey any one except their monarch or his deputy. Langtoft, on the other hand, says that the Scottish hero offered to surrender upon assurance of safety in life, limb, and estate; but Edward’s anger was so hot against him, that he burst into a fury at the bare proposition.

* Wyntown, VIII. xv. v. 65.

When they brought that tiding, Edward was full grim,
 And betaught him the fende,^a als his traytoure in lond.
 And ever-ilkon his frende, that him susteyned, or fond.
 Three hundred marke he hette unto his warisoun,^b
 That with him so met, or bring his hede to toun.
 Now flies William Wallis, of pes nought he spedis,^c
 In mores and in mareis with robberie him fedis.

.
 Ah Jhesu whan thou will, how rightwis is thy mede:
 That of the wrong has gilt, the endyng may he drede.
 William Waleis is nomen,^d that maister was of theves.
 Tiding to the kyng is comen, that robberie mischeves.^e
 Sir Jon of Menetest sewed William so nehi,^f
 He took him whan he wend lest,^g on nyght his lemman by.
 That was thought treson of Jak Short his man,
 He was the encheson,^h that Sir Jon so him nam.ⁱ
 Jak's brother had he slayn, the Waleis that is said,
 The more Jak was fayn to do William that braid.^j
 Selcouthly^k he endis, the man that is fals,
 If he trest on his frends, they begile him als.
 Begiled is William, taken is, and bondon.
 To Ingland with him thei came, and led him to London.
 The first dome he fanged,^l for treson was he drawen.
 For robberie was he hanged, and for he had men slawen,
 And for he had brent abbeis, and men of religion,
 Eft^m from the galweis quickⁿ thei let him down,
 And bouweld him all hote,^o and brent them in the fire.
 His hede than of smote, swilk^p was William's hire;
 And for he had mayntend the werre at his myght,
 On lordship lended thore^q he had no right,
 And stroied thore he knew, in fele stede sers.^r
 His body thei hewed on four quarters,

^a Consigned him to the devil as a traitor.

^b Promised for his reward.

^c Fails in obtaining peace.

^d Taken.

^e Has ill luck.

^f Menteith followed so nigh.

^g Least expected.

^h Occasion.

ⁱ Nimmed, taken.

^j Office.

^k Strangely.

^l Sentence he received.

^m Afterwards.

ⁿ Alive.

^o Embowelled him while warm.

^p Such.

^q Seized there.

^r Destroyed where. In many different places.

To hang in four tounes, to mene^s of his maners,
 In stede of Gonfaynounes^t and of his baners.
 At London is his heved, his quarters ere leved,^u in Scotland
 spred,
 To wirschip ther isles,^v and lere of his wiles, how well
 that he sped.
 It is not to drede, traytour sall spede,^w als he is worthi,
 His lif sall he tyne, and die thorgh pyne, withouten merci.
 Thus may men here, a lad for to lere, to biggen in pays.^x
 It fallis in his eye, that hewes over high, with the Walays.
Langtoft's Chronicle of Edw. I.

“The day after his arrival at London, he was brought on horseback to Westminster, the mayor, sheriffs, and aldermen, and many others, both on foot and horseback, accompanying him; and in the greate hall at Westminster, he being placed upon the south bench, crowned with laurel, for that he had said in times past, that he ought to bear a crowne in that Hall (as it was commonly reported), and being appeached for a traytor by Sir Peter Mallorie, the king's justice, hee answered, that he never was traytor to the king of England, but for other things whereof he was accused, he confessed them, and was after headed and quartered.”*

His head was set up^a at London, his quarters were sent to Newcastle, Berwick, Perth, and Aberdeen. But Edward reaped no advantage from this act of cruelty and injustice, except the gratification of his implacable temper. If intimidation was his object, it failed, as was to be expected in the case of a high-spirited people: and the only effect of raising these ghastly trophies was to inspire a deeper hatred of the tyrant who commanded them, and of the treacherous minister of his revenge. The latter long continued to be an object of especial hatred to the Scottish nation; and is condemned to shame

^s In memory. ^t Standards.

^u Head. Were left (?) ^v ?

^w It is not to be feared a traitor shall succeed.

^x A lad learn (?) to build in peace.

* Stow, Edw. I.

in its traditional literature under the fitting title of the "false Menteith."

Here, it might be supposed, history must end, and the ultimate destiny of the oppressor and oppressed, the tyrant and his victim, remain a mystery until the time when all things shall be brought to light. But the patriotic chronicler before quoted, who probably could not bear that the last scene of his hero should be one of suffering and degradation, undertakes to enlighten our curiosity on this subject. We read in the continuation of *Fordun* by Bower, that, according to the testimony of many credible Englishmen, "an holy hermit, being rapt in the spirit, saw innumerable souls delivered from purgatory marshalling the way, while the spirit of Wallace was conducted to heaven by angels, in reward of his inflexible patriotism. To whom the proverb may be applied, 'The memory of the just with praise, and the name of the wicked stinketh.'"

Soon after, he proceeds to illustrate the latter clause of the proverb. When Edward died upon his march to Scotland, an English knight, Bannister by name, upon the night of his decease, saw in a trance his lord the king, surrounded by a multitude of devils, who were mocking him with much laughter, and saying,

En rex Edwardus, debacchans ut leopardus!
Olim dum vixit populum Dei malefixit.
Nobis viæ talis comes ibis, care sodalis,
Quo condemneris, ut dæmonibus socieris.
Te sequimur voto prorsus torpore remoto.*

Meanwhile they drove him on with whips and scorpions.

* It is impossible in English to give the odd effect of the leonine rhymes. The meaning of these rude lines may be as rudely given thus:

Behold the proud and cruel king, who like a leopard
dread
In life the people of the Lord did put in woeful stead:
For which, good friend, along with us unto that place of
woe,
Where friends and devils company, right merrily you go.

“ Let us sing,” they said, “ the canticle of death, besecming this wicked soul ; because she is the daughter of death, and food of fire unquenchable ; the friend of darkness, and enemy of light.” And then they repeated *En rex*, &c.

While thus tormented by the evil spirits, he turned, said the knight, his trembling and bloodless visage towards me, as if to implore the aid which I was used to minister to him. But when voice and sense both deserted me, he cast upon me such a dreadful look, that while I live and remember it I can never more be cheerful. With that, he was in a moment swallowed up into the infernal pit, exclaiming in a doleful voice,

Heu cur peccavi ? fallor quia non bene cavi.
 Heu cur peccavi ? perit et nihil est quod amavi.
 Heu cur peccavi ? video, quia littus aravi,
 Cum sudore gravi mihimet tormenta paravi.*

Bannister was so terrified by this vision, that he forsook the world and its vanities, and, for the improvement of his life and conversation, spent his latter days in solitude.†

Scotland did not long languish in want of a deliverer. The place of Wallace was quickly filled up by one scarce his inferior in knightly renown, or in the affections of his countrymen. Were it not for the length of this article, we should willingly narrate some of the exploits and hair-breadth escapes which procured for Robert Bruce, even among the English, the reputation of being the third best knight in Europe ; but we must hasten to conclude with the panegyric of the affectionate Bower.

* Why did I sin, woe, woe is me ? and took no heed or thought.

Why did I sin, woe, woe is me ? all that I loved is nought.

Why did I sin, woe, woe is me ? my seed upon the shore

I sowed with toil and sweat, to reap of pains an endless store.

† Lib. xii. 13.

“There is no living man who is able to narrate the story of those complicated misfortunes which befell him in the commencement of this war; his frequent perils, his retreats, the care and weariness, the hunger and thirst, the watching and fasting, the cold and nakedness, to which he exposed his person, the exile into which he was driven, the snares and ambushes which he escaped, the seizure, imprisonment, execution, and utter destruction of his dearest friends and relatives. And if, in addition to these almost innumerable and untoward events, which he ever bore with a cheerful and unconquered spirit, any man should undertake to describe his individual conflicts, and personal successes, those courageous and single-handed combats in which, by the favour of God, and his own great strength and courage, he would often penetrate into the thickest of the enemy,—now becoming the assailant, and cutting down all who opposed him; at another time acting on the defensive, and evincing equal talents in escaping from what seemed inevitable death;—if any writer shall do this, he will prove, if I am not mistaken, that he had no equal in his own time, either in knightly prowess, or in strength and vigour of body.”*

* Lib. xii. 9.

CHAPTER III.

Treatment of Prisoners of War—Cræsus—Roman Triumphs—Sapor and Valerian—Imprisonment of Bajazet—His treatment of the Marshal Boucicaut and his Companions—Changes produced by the advance of Civilization—Effect of Feudal Institutions—Anecdote from Froissart—Conduct of the Black Prince towards the Constable Du Guesclin and the King of France.

THE wealth of Cræsus is proverbial, and the vicissitudes of his fortune have been a favourite subject for moralists in all ages. In Mitford's History of Greece, as well as in that published in the Library of Useful Knowledge, all notice of them is confined to the simple statement, that he was conquered by Cyrus. The circumstances of his treatment, however, as they are related by Herodotus, are curious; and we propose, therefore, to translate them literally from that author, leaving it to the reader's discretion to reject whatever is evidently fabulous.

It is well known that he was induced to make war upon Cyrus by an ambiguous response of the Delphic oracle, which predicted to him, "that if he made war upon the Persians, he would destroy a great empire." The oracle was a very safe one. Cræsus understood it, that the Persian empire would be destroyed; but the credit of the god was equally supported by the event which really took place, the defeat of Cræsus and the destruction of his kingdom. Upon his defeat he took refuge in Sardis, which was besieged and ultimately stormed. "So the Persians captured Sardis and took Cræsus alive, after he had reigned fourteen years; and led him before Cyrus, who caused a mighty funeral pile

to be built, upon which he set Cræsus in fetters, and with him fourteen Lydian youths; whether it were in his mind to offer them to some deity as the first-fruits of his conquest, or with intention to perform some vow, or because he had heard of Cræsus's piety and therefore set him upon the pile, that he might know whether any god would deliver him from being burnt alive. Howbeit, he did so: but while Cræsus stood upon the pile, it struck him, even in this extremity of evil, that Solon was inspired when he said that no man ought to be called happy while he was yet alive.* And when this thought occurred to him, after being long silent, he thrice repeated with groans the name of Solon. Cyrus heard him, and bade the interpreters ask who this Solon, whom he invoked, might be; and they drew near, and did so. But Cræsus spoke not for some time, and replied at length, when he was compelled, 'One whom I would rather than much wealth, were introduced to the conversation of all monarchs.' But as he spoke unintelligibly to them, they again asked what he meant; and when they became urgent and troublesome, he related at length how Solon, an Athenian, came to him, and having beheld all his treasures, set them at nought, having spoken to such purpose, that all things had happened according to his words, which yet bore no especial reference to himself more than to the rest of mankind, particularly to those who trusted in their own good fortune. So by the time Cræsus had given this account, the pile being lighted, the outside of it was in flames. And when Cyrus heard from the interpreters what Cræsus said, he repented, and reflected that he, being but a man himself, was casting another alive into the flames who formerly had been no whit inferior to himself in

* In the celebrated interview between Solon and Cræsus, the sage first offended the king by questioning the power of wealth to produce happiness, and concluded by reading him a long moral lesson, to the purport, that since no man knew what the morrow might produce, no man could be called happy until present prosperity was crowned by a happy death.

prosperity : and being also in dread of divine vengeance, and considering that nothing human is unchangeable, he ordered the fire to be forthwith extinguished, and Cræsus, with his companions, to be taken down ; but his officers, with all their endeavours, were unable to master it. Then Cræsus, as the Lydians say, discovering that Cyrus had changed his purpose, when he saw that all were endeavouring, and yet were unable to quench the fire, called loudly upon Apollo, entreating the god, if that he ever had offered any acceptable gifts, now to stand by, and deliver him from the present evil. And as he called upon the god in tears, suddenly clouds collected in the serene sky, and the storm broke down, and a torrent of rain fell, and extinguished the fire. Cyrus, therefore, being by these means instructed that Cræsus was a good man, and beloved by the gods, inquired of him, when he was come down from the pile, ‘ Cræsus, who persuaded you to invade my kingdom, and thus become an enemy instead of a friend ? ’ And he said, ‘ O king, I have done thus to further your good, and my own evil fate : but the god of the Grecians, who puffed me up to war, has been the author of these events. For no man is so witless as to choose war instead of peace, when, in the one, fathers bury their sons, and in the other, sons their fathers. But it was the pleasure of the gods that these things should turn out thus.’

“ Thus spoke Cræsus, and Cyrus released him, and kept him near his person, and thenceforth treated him with much respect.”*

The evident intermixture of fable with this tale is calculated to throw doubt upon the whole of it, and indeed it seems at variance with the character of Cyrus. That Xenophon omits all mention of the circumstances related would be a strong argument in disproof of them, if they were calculated to advance his hero’s reputation ; but in the present case his silence is of little weight. The close resemblance, however, between the preservation of Cræsus, and the miraculous deliverance of the

Jewish youths condemned by Nebuchadnezzar to the furnace, might warrant us in suspecting that some account of so impressive a display of Divine power had reached the western coast of Asia, and that the careless or unfaithful annalists of those early times transferred the scene from Babylon to Lydia, and substituted the names best known in their own history for the barbarian appellations of the Assyrian monarch and his prisoners. This idea may be supported by the expression of Herodotus, that Cyrus condemned Cræsus to be burnt "because of his piety, that he might know whether any god would deliver him from being burnt alive." Cyrus was neither cruel nor a scoffer, so that we cannot suppose it to have been an impious jest, and can as little imagine that it was a serious experiment on the part of the Persian to try the power of the Grecian deities. It is not very likely, therefore, that such a reason was invented to account for the action; but the recorded preservation of the Jews, and the decree of Nebuchadnezzar "that there is no other god that can deliver after this sort," may well enough have led to the inference that the monarch's object was to prove the power which in the end he was obliged to confess.

No extraordinary quantity either of humanity or reflection was necessary to have impressed on Cyrus's mind, in the first instance, the truths contained in Solon's warning to his rival. But humanity towards prisoners was no virtue of antiquity; and in this respect the practice of European nations of modern times offers a striking contrast to that of heathenism in all ages and regions. Our Scandinavian ancestors and the North American Indians put prisoners to death for revenge, or for the mere pleasure of inflicting pain: the rude Druids and the comparatively polished priests of Mexico alike esteemed an enemy's blood the most grateful offering to their savage deities. The histories of Greece and Rome abound also with acts of atrocious cruelty; while the East is notorious alike for the frequent changes of her dynasties, and for the unsparing policy which has prompted successive conquerors to establish their

own thrones by the extermination of all possible claimants.

It is not fair, however, to select none but unfavourable examples ; and of favourable ones, few or none are more celebrated than the generosity of Alexander and the virtue of Scipio. After Alexander had gained the important battle of Issus (B.C. 333), in the Persian war, Darius's family fell into the victor's hands.* They were treated with the respect due to their rank and their misfortunes. "Not long after, one of his queen's eunuchs escaped to Darius, who, when he saw him, first asked whether his children and his wife and mother were alive. And hearing that they were so, that they were addressed as queens, and enjoyed all the respect and attention which they had possessed at his own court, he inquired in addition, whether his wife had preserved her faith ; and being satisfied on this point also, he again inquired whether any insult or violence had been offered to her. The eunuch affirmed with an oath, 'O king, your wife remains even as you left her, and Alexander is the best and most temperate of men.' Upon which Darius lifted up his hands towards heaven, and prayed, 'O sovereign Jupiter, in whose hands are placed the fortunes of kings upon earth, above all things do thou maintain the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, which thou hast given to me ! But if thou wilt that I be king of Asia no longer, then intrust my power to none but Alexander.'"[†]

Closely akin to this in all its circumstances is the celebrated story of the continence of Scipio, who has

* "Ci doivent prendre garde cils qui leur fames mainent avec euls en os, et en batailles, car Daires li rois de Perse, & Antoinnes, et autre prince terrien manerent leur fames en lor compaignie en os quant il i aloient, & en batailles: et pour ce furent desconfit et occis, Daires par le grant Alexandre, et Antoinnes par Octavien. Pour ce meismement ne devroient mener nus princes fames en tex besoignes: car elles ne sont fors empecchement." The language is that of the thirteenth century. *Croniques de S. Denys*, liv. v. 1.

[†] Arrian, iv. 20.

obtained immortal praise by surrendering untouched to her lover a beautiful Spanish lady who had been selected from the other prisoners and presented to him ; and from the admiration testified by all antiquity for the virtue displayed alike by the Grecian and the Roman hero, we may form an opinion of the treatment which captives generally endured. We have no wish to detract from the praise which is justly due to them, or to undervalue the merit of those who precede their age in humanity and refinement ; but it is worthy of observation that in modern times, far from such conduct being regarded as an effort of virtue almost super-human, infamy or death would be the portion of a general who acted otherwise. These exceptions therefore do really serve to confirm the rule ; and the extravagant commendation which has been bestowed upon such self-denial bears incontrovertible evidence to the general want of generosity in conquerors, and to the unhappy condition of the conquered.

Few foreigners of regal dignity or exalted fortune fell into the power of the Grecian commonwealths : of their treatment of each other's citizens we shall have occasion to speak hereafter. But the gigantic grasp of Roman ambition comprehended the most powerful of the earth, and made them drink deep of degradation. The usual lot of prisoners of war was slavery ; a practice bad enough, but common to the rest of antiquity with Rome : the institution of triumphs is her peculiar glory and distinction. Something may be said in palliation of a victor, who, having possession of his enemy, obviates the danger of further resistance or revolt by committing him to that narrow prison from which alone there is no chance of escape. But when a Roman general's arms were crowned with success, the prisoners of highest estimation were carefully reserved ; and when all danger from their life was at an end, and their degradation, as far as external circumstances can degrade, was complete, after they had been led in chains before their conqueror's car, to swell his vanity and satiate the pride of Rome, they were sent to perish unheeded and unlamented by

the hands of the executioner, and the thanksgiving due to the gods and the triumphal banquet were delayed until the savage ritual was duly performed. "Those even who triumph, and therefore grant longer life to the hostile chiefs, that from their presence in the procession the Roman people may derive its fairest spectacle and fruit of victory, yet bid them to be led to prison when they begin to turn their chariots from the Forum to the Capitol; and the same day puts an end to the conqueror's command and to the life of the conquered."* They led the prisoners to execution at the moment when the triumphal chariot began to ascend the Capitoline hill, in order, they said, that their moment of highest exultation might be that of their enemies' extremest agony. There is a needless barbarity and insolence in the whole proceeding which is peculiarly disgusting; and which was aggravated by the solemn hypocrisy of placing in the triumphal chariot a slave to whisper in the victor's ear, "Remember that thou art a man," when in the same instant they displayed so signal a disregard for the reverses to which humanity is exposed, and such contempt for the lessons which that warning ought to have taught.

We may take as an example the treatment of Jugurtha, king of Numidia; for whom, indeed, so far as his own merits are concerned, no treatment could have been too severe. "Marius, bringing home his army againe out of Lybia into Italy, took possession of his consulship the first day of January, and therewithall made his triumph into the city of Rome, shewing that to the Romans which they thought never to have seen; and that was, king Jugurth prisoner, who was so subtile a man, and could so well frame himself unto his fortune, and with his craft and subtilty was of so [great] courage besides, that none of his enemies ever hoped to have had him alive. But it is said that after he was led in this triumph, he fell mad straight upon it; and the pompe of triumph being ended, he was carried unto prison, where the serjeants, for hast to have the spoil of him, tore his

* In Verrem. Act. ii. lib. v. 30.

apparel by force from off his back : and because they would take away his rich gold earrings, that hung on his eares, they pulled away with them the tippe of his eare, and then cast him naked to the bottome of a deep dungeon, his wits being altogether troubled, Yet when they did throw him downe, laughing he said, ' O Hercules, how cold are your baths ! ' He lived there yet six days, fighting with hunger, and desiring alwaies to prolong his miserable life to the last hour : the which was a just deserved punishment for his wicked life."*

Marius, however, with all his military talents was but a rude and blood-thirsty soldier. From Cæsar, on the contrary, who throughout the civil wars displayed signal generosity and mildness of temper, we might have expected a fairer estimate of the treatment due to a noble enemy. But in his treatment of Vercingetorix those noble qualities are exchanged for the haughty and selfish cruelty which the foreign policy of Rome was most admirably calculated to produce. That prince, after a most gallant and almost successful stand in defence of the liberties of Gaul, being shut up in Alesia, and reduced to extremity by Cæsar, surrendered himself to the victor's mercy in hope of obtaining better terms for his comrades. The scene is thus described by Dion Cassius :—

" Vercingetorix being still at liberty, and unwounded, might have escaped ; but hoping, for the sake of their previous friendship, to obtain forgiveness from Cæsar, he went out to him without notice of his coming. And while the Roman general was seated on the tribunal, he appeared suddenly, so as to alarm some persons, for he was tall of stature, and made a gallant appearance in his armour. All around being hushed, he said nothing, but fell on his knee, stretching out his hand in gesture of supplication. All others were struck with compassion, both by the recollection of his former high state, and by the exceeding piteousness of the spectacle before them. But Cæsar made that from which he chiefly expected

* Plut. in Mar.

to derive safety, the heaviest charge against him; for, dwelling on the return for his friendship, he made the injury appear the heavier. And therefore he pitied him not in that conjuncture, but for the present cast him into bonds, reserving him until his triumph, after which he slew him.”*

But Rome, which had so often insulted the majesty of fallen royalty, endured in the person of one of her emperors a greater degradation than any which she had inflicted. When the emperor Valerian was taken prisoner by Sapor, king of Persia, his life was spared, but spared that his age might waste in the most humiliating slavery; and when the haughty monarch mounted his horse, he used the prostrate body of his royal captive for a footstool. That, said the haughty Sapor, was a real triumph; not painting imaginary processions upon walls, as the Romans did. To gratify the victor’s pride still more, he was compelled to wear the imperial purple and decorations, and in this attire, laden with chains, he followed in the train of Sapor, and exhibited to the whole Persian empire a striking picture of the fallen pride of Rome. This system of insult extended even beyond the grave: his skin is related to have been dyed scarlet, and stuffed, and then placed in a temple as an enduring monument of the shame of Rome. The Christian writers, who alone relate all the particulars of Valerian’s humiliation,† see in it the just vengeance of God for his persecution of our faith: the reason, probably, that Gibbon seems inclined to consider the story as a pious fiction. If so, however, it soon obtained currency, for the Emperor Constantine, who flourished not much more than half a century after

* Dion, lib. xl.—Cæsar, in his Commentaries, slurs this transaction over with the mere notice that Vercingetorix was surrendered (viii. 89).

† “Valerian for his persecutions was exposed to insult and reproaches, according to what was spoken to Isaiah, saying, ‘They have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and recompense their sins upon them.’”—*Dionysius of Alexandria*, ap. *Euseb.*, lib. vii. 10.

the event, alludes to it in a letter to the king of Persia : " All these emperors (the persecutors of Christianity) have been destroyed by such a dreadful and avenging end, that since their times all mankind doth usually wish their calamities may fall as a curse and punishment upon those who shall study to imitate them. One of which persons I judge him to have been (him, I mean, whom divine vengeance like a thunderbolt drove out of our regions, and conveyed unto your country) who by his own disgrace and ignominy erected that trophy so much boasted of among you."*

Somewhat similar to the indignities offered to Valerian was the treatment which the Sultan Bajazet is said to have experienced from Tamerlane after his defeat and capture.

Closed in a cage, like some destructive beast,
I'll have thee borne about in public view ;
A great example of the righteous vengeance
That waits on cruelty and pride like thine.†

Voltaire and other modern writers have discredited this story, chiefly on the authority of D'Herbelot. It has been shown, however, by Sir W. Jones, that the premises of that distinguished orientalist are false, and his authority therefore falls to the ground. On the other hand, Leunclavius, in his History of the Turks, professes to have heard from an old man, who was in Bajazet's service at the time of his defeat, " that an iron cage was made by Timour's command, composed on every side of iron gratings, through which he could be seen in any direction. He travelled in this den slung between two horses. Whenever Timour and his retinue, on moving his camp, made ready for a journey, he was usually carried before ; and after the march, when they dis-

* Euseb., Life of Constantine, lib. iv. 11.'

† Tamerlane—a tragedy worth reading, to see the notion which Rowe had of a Tartar chief, and the absurdity produced by treating such subjects with the sentimental bombast of the heroic romance.

mounted, he was placed upon the ground in his cage, before Timour's tent." Poggio also, himself a contemporary, mentions this strange imprisonment as an undoubted fact.*

The English reader will find some countenance for the story in Edward the First's inhuman treatment of the Countess of Buchan. That lady having dared, it is said, in virtue of hereditary privileges, to place the crown of Scotland on the Bruce's head, and afterwards falling into the English monarch's hands, was confined in a cage built upon one of the towers of Berwick Castle, exposed, as it should seem, to the rigour of the elements and the gaze of passers by. One of Bruce's sisters was similarly dealt with. So much for the devoted respect paid to women in the age of chivalry, and that by a prince who, when young, was inferior to none in knightly renown. But the demoralizing effects of absolute power found a fitting subject to work upon in Edward's stern and unforgiving temper. The original order for the Countess's confinement is to this effect:—

“ Ordered and commanded, by letters under the privy seal, to the Chamberlain of Scotland, or his deputy at Berwick-upon-Tweed, that in one of the turrets, upon the castle of that place, in such place as he shall chuse, and shall be most convenient, he do make a cage of

* M. de Masson asserts (it is to be taken on his authority, not on ours) that he knew a lady of the Russian court, in the reign of Catherine II., who kept a slave who was her perruquier shut up in a cage in her own chamber. She let him out every day to arrange her head-dress, and locked him up again with her own hands after the business of the toilet was over. His box was placed at her bed-head, and in this fashion he attended her wherever she went. His fare was bread and water. He passed three years in this captivity, the object of which was to conceal from all the world that the lady wore a wig. The close confinement was a punishment for running away from her service; the meagre diet a measure of revenge, because he could not prevent her growing older and uglier every day.—*Mémoires Secrets sur la Russie.*

strong lattice-work and bars, and well strengthened with iron-work, in the which he shall place the Countess of Buchan.

“And that he shall so well and surely guard her in the same cage, that in no manner shall she pass out from it.

“And that he do appoint one or two English women of the said town of Berwick who shall be in no wise suspected, who understand to serve the said Countess with meat and drink, and all things pertaining to her.

“And that he do so well and strictly guard her in the cage, that she speak to none, and that no man or woman of the Scotch nation, nor any other appear before her, but only the woman or women who shall be assigned her, and those who shall have guard of her.

“And that the cage be so made, that the Countess may have there the convenience of a fair chamber, but that it be so well and surely ordered, that no danger may betide in respect of the custody of the said Countess.

“And that he who has care of her be charged to answer for her, body for body, and that he be allowed her expenses.

“In like manner it is ordered that Mary, sister of Robert Bruce, sometime Earl of Carrick, be sent to Roxburgh, to be kept there in the castle, in a cage.”*

The reader will not sympathise much with the harshness of Bajazet's durance, if he knows the character of that redoubtable conqueror. The following passage will convey a fair idea of it, and presents a good specimen of the style of the 15th century:—

“In the year 1396, Sigismond, King of Hungry, sent sweet and amyable letters to the French king by a notable ambassador, a bysshop and two knights of Hungry. In the same letters was containyd a greate parte of the state and doying of the greate Turke (Bajazet), and how that he had sent worde to the King of Hungry, that he would come and fight with him in the middes of his

* Rymer, *Fœdera*, vol. ii.

realme, and would go fro thens to the cytie of Rome, and would make his horse to eate otes upon the high altar of Saynt Peter, and there to hold his see imperiale. Thus the King of Hungry in his letters prayed the French king to ayde and succour him.”* In consequence of this application, a strong body of French and other knights marched into Hungary, under command of John of Burgundy, Earl of Nevers. They crossed the Danube, and after a successful campaign were besieging Nicopolis in union with the Hungarian forces, when Bajazet marched to the relief of that city. The loss of the battle which ensued is attributed by Froissart to the precipitance of the French knights, who led the van, and rushed madly into combat, against the order of the King of Hungary, and without waiting for his support. The biographer of the Marshal Boucicaut, on the other hand, throws the whole blame upon the cowardly desertion of the Hungarians. However this may be, the French charged in a body not exceeding 700 men,† routed the first body of Bajazet’s cavalry, and penetrated through a line of stakes, behind which the infantry were formed. “Then the noble Frenchmen, like men already enraged at the loss which they had endured, ran upon them with such valour and hardihood that they frightened all. I may not say how they laid upon them. For never did foaming boar, or angry wolf, shew a fiercer recklessness of life. There the valiant Marshal of France, Boucicaut, among other brave men, thrust himself into the thickest press, and well proved whether he were grieved or no. For there without fail did he so many acts of arms, that all marvelled, and there bore himself so knightly, that whoso saw him still avers there never was any man, knight or other, seen to do in one day more brave and valiant acts than he did then.”‡ The Earl of Nevers, the Lord of Coucy, and the other French nobility well approved their valour; but Boucicaut, if we may trust his biographer, was the hero of the day. Mounted on a power-

* Lord Berners’s Froissart, vol. ii. chap. 203.

† Froissart.

‡ Hist. de M. Boucicaut.

ful war-horse, he spurred forwards, and struck so fiercely to the right and to the left that he overthrew everything before him. "And ever doing thus, he advanced so far, which is a marvellous thing to relate, and yet true, as all who saw it can bear witness, that he cut through the whole Saracen array, and then returned back through them to his comrades. Heaven, what a knight! God protect his valour! Pity will it be when life shall fail him! But it will not be so yet, for God will protect him. Thus fought our countrymen as long as their strength lasted. Ah, what pity for so noble a company, approved so gentle, so chivalrous, so excellent in arms, which could have succour from no quarter, so ran they in to their enemies' throats, so as is the iron on the anvil!* For they were surrounded and oppressed so fatally on all sides that they could no longer resist. And what wonder? for there were more than twenty Saracens against one Christian! And yet our people killed more than 20,000 of them, but at last they could exert themselves no more. Ah, what a misfortune, what pity! Ought not those disloyal Christians to have been hanged who thus falsely abandoned them? Shame fall upon them, for had they helped the valiant French and their comrades with good will, not Bajazet nor one of his Turks would have escaped death or captivity, which would have been a mighty good to all Christendom.

"Great pity was there again the morrow of this dolorous battle. For Bajazet, sitting within a tent in the midst of the field, caused to be led before him the Earl of Nevers and those of his lineage, with all the French barons, knights, and esquires who remained after the slaughter of that field. Sad was it to see these noble youths, in the prime of life, of blood so lofty as that of the royal line of France, fast bound with ropes, disarmed, in their under doublets, conducted by these ugly, frightful dogs

"Ains cheurent en la gueule de leurs ennemies, si comme est le fer sur l'enclume." It is a queer comparison: the only apparent resemblance is in the thorough beating which they and the iron were both destined to undergo.

of Saracens before the tyrant enemy of the faith who sat there. He knew for certain, through good interpreters, that the Earl of Nevers was grandson and cousin-german to a king of France, and that his father was a duke of great power and wealth, and that others were of the same blood and nearly related to the king. So he be-thought himself, that for preserving them he might have great treasure : therefore he did not put them to death, nor any other of the greatest barons, but made them sit there on the ground before him. Alas ! immediately after began the cruel sacrifice. For then were led before him the noble Christian barons, knights, and esquires, naked ; and then, as they paint on the walls King Herod sitting on a chair, and the Innocents cut in pieces before him, there were our faithful Christians cut in pieces by these Saracen curs before the Earl of Nevers and under his very eyes. So you may understand, you who hear this, what grief went to his heart, good and kind lord as he is, and what pain it gave him to see thus martyred his good and loyal companions, and his people that had been so faithful to him, and who were so distinguished for gallantry. Certes I think he was so grieved at heart, that fain would he have been of their company in that slaughter. And so the Turks led them one after another to martyrdom, as men led in old times the blessed martyrs, and struck their heads and chests and shoulders fearfully with great knives, and felled them without mercy. Well may one know with what woful countenances they went in that sad procession. For even as the butcher drags a lamb to the slaughter, so were our good Christians, without a word being spoken, led to die before the tyrant. But notwithstanding that their death was hard and their case pitiful, every good Christian should esteem them thrice fortunate, and born in a happy hour, to receive such a death. For they must sometime have died, and God gave them grace to die in the advancement of the Christian religion, the holiest and worthiest death (as we in our faith hold) that a Christian can die ; and also he made them to be the companions of the blessed martyrs, the happiest of all the orders of Saints

in Paradise. For there is no doubt but that they are Saints in Paradise, if they met their fate with good will. In this piteous procession was Boucicaut, the Marshal of France, naked, except his small clothes (*petits draps*). But God, who willed not to lose his servant, for the sake of the good service which he was to do thereafter, as well in avenging the death of that glorious company upon the Saracens, as in the other great benefits which were to follow from his talents and by his means, caused the Earl of Nevers to look at the Marshal and the Marshal at him right sorrowfully, at the very moment that some one was about to strike him. Then was the foresaid Earl wonderfully vexed at heart for the death of such a man, and he called to mind the great good, the prowess, loyalty, and valour that were in him. So, on a sudden, God put it in his mind to clasp his hands together as he looked at Bajazet, and he made sign that the Marshal was to him as a brother, and that he should respite him: which sign Bajazet soon understood, and released him. When this stern execution was complete, and the whole field was strewed with the bodies of these blessed martyrs, as many French as others of divers countries, that cursed Bajazet arose, and ordered the Marshal, who had been so respited, to be committed to prison in a large handsome town of Turkey, called Bursa. So his bidding was done, and he was kept there till the arrival of the said Bajazet.*

Innumerable instances of the like ferocity might be produced from Eastern history. Rowe's polished and pious Tamerlane "put to death 100,000 persons in the streets of Delhi. Few men have so well and fairly estimated their own character, and the class to which they belong, as did Nadir Shah, when to the remonstrance, "If thou art a king, cherish and protect thy people,—if a prophet, shew us the way of salvation,—if a God, be merciful to thy creatures," he replied, "I am neither a king to protect my subjects, nor a prophet to teach the way of salvation, nor a God to exercise the attribute of mercy; but I am he whom the Almighty

* Hist. de M. de Boucicaut; première partie, chaps. xxv. xxvi.

has sent in his wrath to chastise a world of sinners." The following anecdote, striking in itself, is the more interesting as an exception to a general rule: "In the year 1068 Alp Arslan, the second sultan of Persia, of the Seljukian dynasty, defeated and took prisoner Romanus Diogenes, husband of Eudocia, the reigning empress of Constantinople. He treated his prisoner with extreme kindness and distinction; he uttered no reproaches that could wound a humbled monarch, but gave vent to the honest indignation of a warrior at the base and cowardly conduct of those who had deserted and abandoned so brave a leader. We are told that he asked his captive at their first conference, what he would have done if fortune had reversed their lot. 'I would have given thee many a stripe,' was the imprudent and virulent answer. This expression of haughty and unsubdued spirit excited no anger in the brave and generous conqueror. He only smiled, and asked Romanus what he expected would be done to him? 'If thou art cruel,' said the emperor, 'put me to death. If vain-glorious, load me with chains, and drag me to thy capital. If generous, grant me my liberty!' Alp Arslan was neither cruel nor vain-glorious: he released his prisoner, gave all his officers who were captives dresses of honour, and distinguished them by every mark of friendship and regard."*

Far from wishing to cast an undue reproach upon the past by these melancholy details of cruelty and suffering, we should have been glad to relieve the narrative by more numerous instances of generosity and mercy. But that these virtues are not the attributes of a savage race, will readily be granted by all: that [they are not necessarily the fruit of refinement and civilization (if that term be applicable to an advanced stage of art and knowledge, without a corresponding improvement in moral wisdom) is shown by the universal experience of the past, and nowhere more forcibly than in the history of Greece and Rome. The progress of society seems only to have

* Malcolm, History of Persia.

taught one lesson ; that it is better to make the conquered subservient to the profit or amusement of the conqueror, than to put him to death, like any other formidable or offensive animal. In man's earliest and rudest condition, as a hunter, slaves are worse than useless ; for sustenance is of more value than labour, and the precarious supply of the chase is insufficient to provide permanently and plentifully for his own wants. The avenging or preventing encroachments upon each other's hunting-ground is therefore a most frequent cause of warfare among neighbouring tribes, and the massacre of the conquered is prompted equally by revenge and policy. We find accordingly that in North America a prisoner's only chance of escape lay in being adopted into the hostile tribe in the place of some one who had fallen in battle. The still more savage practice of feasting upon prisoners is sufficiently proved to have existed at a very recent period in New Zealand. In other heathen countries they have been reserved from indiscriminate slaughter, only to perish on the altars of false gods. But labour becomes valuable, and the command of labour an advantage, in proportion as men emerge from barbarism, and apply themselves to agriculture, or a pastoral life ; and when it is found out that a prisoner's services may be made worth more than his maintenance, the policy of the victor changes, and he preserves an enemy whom formerly he was almost compelled to destroy. Slavery, therefore, is, in the infancy of nations, an index of increasing civilization, and an amelioration of human misery, since the bulk of mankind have ever hailed with joy a respite from death, even though existence be attended with degradation and suffering. A generous spirit, indeed, would be little gratified at receiving life upon terms of hopeless servitude ; yet even to such the introduction of slave labour lightened the evils of defeat. When men were detained merely for the value of their services, it was natural to release them if an equivalent for that value were paid, and hence arose the custom of admitting prisoners to ransom, which exercised a two-fold influence in favour of slaves : first by enabling them to acquire

freedom at the sacrifice of wealth; secondly, by removing the utter hopelessness and degradation of their state, and introducing a possibility that the slave and master might some day be replaced in their original relation to each other. This practice was familiar in the Homeric age, though revenge or the heat of battle often caused mercy and interest to be alike disregarded. Melancholy indeed was the fate of a captured city. The adult males were usually slaughtered, the females and children reserved for slavery; those even of the highest rank were employed as menial servants in the victor's household. "What evils," says Priam, "does Jupiter reserve me to behold on the threshold of age! My sons slain, my daughters dragged into slavery, my chambers plundered, the very infants dashed against the ground in mournful warfare, and my sons' wives dragged by the destructive hands of the Greeks. The dogs which I fed in my palace, at my own table, to protect it, will tear me, even me, stretched dead at the outer door, as they lie ravening in the vestibule lapping my blood. To a young man it is becoming to lie slain in warfare, pierced by the sharp sword; to such nothing that can happen in death is unseemly. But that dogs should defile the grey head and the grey beard of a slaughtered elder, this is the mournfulest thing that happens to wretched mortals."*

For the lot of those who were reserved, we may quote Hector's parting speech to Andromache.:

I know the day draws nigh when Troy shall fall,
 When Priam and his nation perish all:
 Yet less forebodings of the fate of Troy,
 Her king, and Hecuba, my peace destroy;
 Less that my brethren, all th' heroic band,
 Should with their blood imbrue their native land;
 Than thoughts of thee in tears, to Greece a prey,
 Dragged by the grasp of war in chains away,
 Of thee in tears, beneath an Argive roof
 Labouring reluctant the allotted woof,
 Or doomed to draw, from Hypereia's cave,
 Or from Messeis' fount, the measured wave.

* Il. xxii. 60—76.

A voice will then be heard which thou must bear,
 'See'st thou yon captiye, pouring tear on tear?
 Lo! Hector's wife, the hero bravest far
 When Troy and Greece round Ilion clashed in war.*

As time advanced the Greeks became more humane, and the treatment of their prisoners improved; insomuch that about the year 500 B. C. it seems to have been usual among the Peloponnesian states to admit each other's citizens to ransom at a fixed sum of two minæ, something less than eight pounds of our money;† and the Athenians released certain Bœotians for the same sum.‡ The meridian splendour of Greece, as we shall have future occasion to notice, is more especially dimmed by the cold-blooded cruelty of her civil wars. It is observable, however, that in the 10th year of the Peloponnesian war, the mutual restoration of prisoners formed a condition in a treaty of peace; and this, we believe, is the first instance on record at all resembling the humane usage of the present day.

In the youth of Rome, as she gradually extended her dominion, cities were depopulated to be refilled by her citizens, and their inhabitants sold like cattle, by public auction.§ In her days of greatness, when whole kingdoms fell before her, the rights of conquest were necessarily more leniently exercised; for nations cannot be dispossessed and enslaved in mass. But the number of Greek and of Syrian slaves in Rome shows that the independence of those nations was not overturned without a corresponding loss of private freedom; and those uncivilised countries, which could contribute little else of wealth to satiate a Roman general's extortion, saw droves of their inhabitants sold into captivity to supply the labourers and gladiators of an idle and dissolute

* vi. 447—461. Sotheby's Homer.

† Weight for weight: to determine the sum which two minæ would correspond to in value is less easy.

‡ Herod. v. 77; vi. 79.

§ See the instances of Fidenæ, Liv. iv. 34; Veii, v. 22.—*Carthage. Appian.*

empire.* The exemption of modern Europe from these horrors is chiefly referable to the influence of Christianity, which, however ineffectual to purify the minds and lives of a vast majority of those who have outwardly embraced it, has given unquestionable proof of its intrinsic excellence by refining and enlarging men's views of morality and benevolence, wherever its doctrines have not been altogether obscured and corrupted.† It is true that in the reign of Justinian, Constantinople witnessed for the first and only time the insolent splendour of a Roman triumph, granted to Belisarius after the reduction of the Vandal kingdom; on which, as on former occasions, the noblest of the conquered nation, headed by Gelimer, their king, swelled the vainglorious procession. But the changed spirit of the times is shown in the subsequent treatment of them. To the king and his family a safe retirement and an ample estate in Galatia were allotted; and the flower of the Vandal youth were enlisted, and served with distinction in the Persian wars. Among other claims to our gratitude, the clergy of the dark ages have the merit of steadily resisting the practice of enslaving Christians. The working of the feudal system was also beneficial in this respect. The aristocracy of the land were also its soldiery; to make prisoners, therefore, was a greater object than to kill, for the ransom of prisoners was a

* In Epirus, 150,000 persons are said to have been enslaved by L. Æmilius Paulus. In Cæsar's Gallic wars 1,000,000 prisoners were taken and of course sold. (*Plin. Hist. Nat.* vii. 25.) Another million is said to have been slain: but these round numbers may be suspected to be much exaggerated. Upwards of 100,000 Jews, according to Josephus, were reduced to slavery by Titus. Cicero says of Britain, "It is well known that there is not a drachm of silver in the island, and no hope of booty except in slaves; and among them you will hardly find learned men or musicians." *Ad Att.* iv. 16.

† It would be uncandid to pass in entire silence over the two deepest stains—perhaps in modern history—the Spanish conquests in America, and the slave trade.

never-failing source of revenue to the brave and powerful. And as the inferior classes might not be reduced to domestic servitude, and besides passed naturally with the land, whether as serfs, in absolute and acknowledged bondage, or as vassals, free in name, but bound to the soil by all the ties of property, the victor had no interest in the detention of prisoners, except such as were able to purchase freedom. The singular institutions of chivalry also exercised a strong influence in humanizing warfare. Knighthood formed a bond of union throughout Europe. Men fought for gain, for honour, for revenge ; but victory, which ensured all but the last, was seldom tarnished by cruelty, except in instances of deadly feud. We are by no means inclined to overrate the savage virtues of those times, or to deny that they abound in examples of most flagrant cruelty and oppression ; but we contend, that compared with earlier ages, place even barbarism against refinement, the half-savage Teuton against the polished Greek or Roman, we see the tokens of a vast improvement in this respect. And we may further observe that of the cruelties recorded a large proportion are foreign to the question, being perpetrated in prosecution of the cherished spirit of revenge, 'or to extract wealth from Jews, or others of inferior rank, and not on prisoners of war. We do not plead this in extenuation of those enormities ; the evil passions of the heart sprung up unchecked into a plentiful harvest of evil actions : but of cruelty to their prisoners of war, the Europeans and the middle ages were comparatively guiltless. Among them, for the first time in history, the victor and the defeated mixed in social intercourse upon terms of equality, without degradation being felt by the one, or an undue and ungenerous superiority assumed by the other ; each aware that on the morrow the turn of fortune might reverse their situations, and that disgrace attached to misfortune only when occasioned by misconduct.* And the lofty, though fantastic notions of honour which prevailed, tended still further to

* See, below, the Black Prince's address to John of France.

lighten captivity, when the word of a knight was considered as sufficient surety for his ransom, and prisoners were enabled to obtain their release upon parole. Nowhere is this courteous and humane spirit more strongly marked than in the wars of England and Scotland during the 14th century. Yet we might expect to find the warfare of that century distinguished by more than usual inhumanity. The perfidious aggression, the inveterate hostility of Edward I., were calculated to raise in the Scotch a most implacable resentment; while the obstinate resistance, and successful reprisals in which our northern counties were repeatedly devastated, were equally well fitted to inspire the English with no friendly feelings towards their northern brethren. A hundred years had elapsed since the first quarrel, during which the sword had scarcely been sheathed, the fire of burning villages scarcely quenched. We might reasonably then expect to find these wars carried on "à outrance;" to find no mercy in their battles, no gentleness or generosity in their intercourse. But the account of Froissart is very different.

"Englysshmen on the one partye, and scottes on the other partye, are goode men of warre, for when they mete there is a hard fight, without sparynge; there is no troo bytwene them as long as speares, swordes, axes, or daggers wyll endure, but lay on eche upon other; and whan they be well beaten, and that the one parte hath optaygned the victory, they then glorifye so in their dedes of armes, and are so ioyfull, that such as be taken, they shall be raunsomed or they go out of the felde, so that shortely eche of them is so content with other, that at their departynge curtoysly they will saye, Gode thank you, but in fyghtynge one with another there is no playe, nor sparynge; and this is trewe, and that shall well apere; by this sayde rencounter (of Otterbourn), for it was as valyauntly foughten as coulede be devysed. This batayle was fierse and cruell, tyll it came to the end of the discomfiture; but whan the scottes saw the englysshmen recule, and yelde themselves, than the scottes were curtes, and sette them to their raunsom,

and every manne sayde to his prisoner, Sirs, go and unarm you and take your ease, I am your mayster ; and so made their prisoners as goode chere as though they had been brethern, without doying them any damage.”*

Another anecdote of the same battle, from the same graphic and delightful historian, will serve to illustrate more than one of the points to which the reader's attention has been drawn. Sir Matthew Reedman, the governor of Berwick, fought under Percy at Otterbourn and endeavoured to escape when fortune declared against the English.

“ Now I shall shewe you of sir Mathue Reedman, who was on horsback to save himselfe, for he alone coude not remedy the mater : at his departing sir James Lynsay was nere to hym, and sawe how sir Mathue departed, and this sir James, to wyn honour, folowed in chase sir Mathue Reedman, and came so nere hym, that he myght have stryken hym with his speare if he had lyst ; than he sayd, Ah sir knyght, tourne, it is a shame thus to flye : I am James of Lynsay : if ye will not tourne I shall stryke ye on the back with my spere. Sir Mathue spake no worde, but strake his horse with the spurs sorer than he dyde before. In this maner he chased hym more than thre myles, and at last sir Mathue Reedman's horse foundred and fell under hym : than he stepte forthe on the erthe, and drewe oute his sworde, and took corage to defende hymselfe : and the scotte thought to have stryken him on the brest, but sir Mathue Reedman swarved from the stroke, and the speare poynt entred into the erthe : then sir Mathue strake asonder the spere with his sworde ; and whan sir James Lynsay sawe howe he had loste his speare, he caste awaye the tronchon, and lyghted afote, and toke a lytell batayle-axe that he caryed at his backe, and handeled it with his one hande, quickly and delyverly, in the whiche feate scottes be well experte, and than he set at sir Mathue and he defended hymselfe properly. Thus

* Froissart, vol. ii. cap. 142, 145 (138, 141).

they tourneyed toguyder, one with an axe, and the other with a swerde, a long season, and no man to lette them: fynally, sir James Lynsay gave the knyght suche strokes, and helde hym so shorte, that he was putte out of brethe in such wyse that he yelded hymselfe and sayde, Sir James Lynsay, I yelde me to you. Well, quod he, and I receyve you, rescue or no rescue. I am content, quod Reedman, so you deale with me lyke a good companyon. I shall nat fayle that, quod Lynsay, and so putte up his swerde. Well, sir, quod Reedman, what wyll you nowe that I shall do? I am your prisoner, ye have conquered me; I wolde gladly go agayne to Newcastle, and within fyftene dayes I shall come to you into Scotlande, whereas ye shall assigne me. I am content, quod Lynsay: ye shall promyse by your faythe to present yourself within this thre wekes at Edenborowe, and wheresoever ye go, to reporte yourselfe my prisoner. All this sir Mathue sware, and promysed to fulfyll. Than eche of them toke their horses, and toke leave, eche of other. Sir James returned, and his entent was to go to his owne company the same way as he came, and sir Mathue Reedman to Newcastle. Sir James Lynsay could nat keep the ryght waye as he came: it was darke, and a myst, and he hadde nat rydden halfe a myle, but he met face to face with the bysshoppe of Durham and mo than v hundred Englysshmen with hym: he myght wel have escaped, if he had wolde, but he supposed it had been his owne company that had pursued the Englysshmen: whan he was among them, one demaunded of hym what he was. I am, quod he, sir James Lynsay. The bysshoppe herde those words, and stepte to hym, and sayde, Lynsay, ye are taken; yelde ye to me. Who be you? quod Lynsay. I am, quod he, the bysshop of Durham. And fro whens come ye, sir? quod Lynsay. I come fro the batayle, quod the bysshoppe, but I strake never a stroke there; I go back to Newcastle for this night, and ye shall go with me. I may nat chuse, quod Lynsay, sithe you will have it so: I have taken, and I am taken; such is the adventures of armes. Whom have ye taken? quod the bysshop. Sir,

quod he, I toke in the chase sir Mathue Reedman. And where is he ? quod the bysshop. By my faythe, sir, he is retourned to Newcastle : he desyred me to trust hym on his fayth for thre wekes, and so have I done. Well, quod the bysshop, lette us go to Newcastle, and there ye shall spake with hym. Thus they rode to Newcastle toguyder, and sir James Lynsay was prisoner to the bisshop of Durham."

"After that sir Mathue Reedman was retourned to Newcastle, and hadde shewed to dyvers howe he had been taken prisoner by sir James Lynsay ; than it was shewed him howe the bisshoppe of Durham had taken the sayd sir James Lynsay, and how that he was there in the towne as his prisoner : as sone as the bysshoppe was departed, sir Mathue Reedman wente to the bysshoppes lodgyng to see his mayster, and there he founde hym in a studye, lyeng in a wyndowe, and sayd, What, sir James Lynsay, what make you here ? Than sir James came forth of the studye to hym, and gave hym good morowe, and sayd, By my fayth, sir Mathue, fortune hath brought me hyder ; for as sone as I was departed fro you, I mette by chaunce the bysshoppe of Durham, to whome I am prisoner, as ye be to me. I beleve ye shall nat nede to come to Edenborowe to me to make your fynaunce : I think rather we shall make an exchaunge one for another, if the bysshoppe be so contente. Well, sir, quod Reedman, we shall accorde ryght well toguyder : ye shall dyne this daye with me ; the bysshop and our men be gone forthe to fyght with your men. I can not tell what shall fall ; we shall know at their retourne. I am content to dyne with you, quod Lynsay. Thus these two knyghtes dyned toguyder in Newcastle."*

Some danger unquestionably there was, that where the marketable value of prisoners was so clearly recognised, humanity would be forgotten in avarice ; a lapse of memory which our acquaintance with Algiers and other piratical states proves not altogether impossible.

* Froissart, vol. ii., cap. 146 (142).

One of the causes which prevented this, the union and equality produced by knighthood, has been alluded to; and we may find another in the high-spirited notions of personal honour which prevailed.* To refuse a prisoner his liberty upon payment of ransom, either directly or covertly, by demanding a sum disproportionate to his rank and means, was held dishonourable; for a knight would have esteemed himself disgraced if it could be suspected that he retained an enemy in prison through fear of meeting him in the open field. "After that the Prince of Wales was returned from Spain into Aquitayne, and his brother, the Duke of Lancastre, into Englande, and every lorde into his owne, sir Bertram du Guesclin was styll prisoner with the prince, and with sir Johan Chandos, and coulde nat come to his raunsome, nor fynauce, the whiche was sore displeasaunt to kyng Henry,† if he might have mended it: and it so fortunéd after, as I was enformed, that on a day the prince called to hym sir Bertram du Guesclin, and demaunded of hym how he dyde; he answered and sayd, Sir, it was never better with me; it is reason that it shulde be so, for I am in prison with the most renowned knyght of the worlde. With whome is that? sayd the prince. Sir, quoth he, that is with Sir Johan Chandos; and, sir, it is sayd in the realme of Fraunce, and in other places, that ye feare me so moche, that ye dare nat let me out of prison, the whiche to me is full great honour. The prince, who understode well the wordes of sir Bertram du Guesclin, and parceyved well how his own counsaile wolde in no wyse that he shuld delyver hym, unto the

* We cannot deny this merit at least to what is called, vaguely enough, the age of chivalry. Few indeed merited the appellation of Bayard, "*sans peur, et sans reproche*," but many were "*sans peur*," and thereby escaped one most fruitful source of "*reproche*."

† In the contest for the crown of Castile, between Don Pedro and Henry of Transtamara, the former was supported by the Black Prince, the latter by the French under Du Guesclin, who had been taken prisoner by Sir John Chandos.

tyme that king Don Peter had payed him all suche sommes as he was bound to do. Than he sayd to sir Bertram, Sir, then ye thinke that we kepe you for feare of your chivalry; nay, thynke it nat, for I swere by saint George, it is nat so; therefore pay for your raunsome an hundred thousand fraunkes, and ye shall be delyvered. Sir Bertram, who desyred gretly to be delyvered, and herde on what poynt he might depart, toke the prince with that worde, and sayd, Sir, in the name of God so be it, I wyll pay no lasse. And whan the prince herde hym say so, he wolde than gladly have repented hymselfe; and also some of his counsaile came to hym, and sayd, Sir, ye have nat done well so lightly to put him to his raunsome. And so they wolde gladly have caused the prince to have revoked that covenant; but the prince, who was a true and noble knight, sayd, Sithe that we agreed therto, we wyll nat breke our promise; it shulde be to us a grete rebuke, shame and reproche, if we shulde nat put him to raunsome, seyng he is content to pay such a grete somme as an hundred thousand fraunkes.”*

The following story of William Rufus, which is told by William of Malmsbury, illustrates the character of the man, rather than the spirit of the age. Helias de Flechia laid claim to the city of Mans, part of that monarch's continental possessions. He was taken and brought before William, who said insultingly, “I have you, sir.” “You have taken me by chance,” said the baron; “could I escape, I should find something new to do.” The hot-headed king, shaking his fist, replied, “You rascal, what would you do? Troop, shog off,

* Froissart, vol. i. chap. 239. Subjoined to the chapter the reader will find another version of this story, taken from a most amusing book, entitled ‘*Mémoires de Messire Bertrand du Guesclin.*’ The passage from Froissart, which illustrates the same point in a much smaller compass, seemed better fitted for insertion in the text; but the other gives such a minute and pleasant representation of manners, that we cannot altogether omit it; and it is too long for a note.

make yourself scarce—you may do what you can; and by the face of St. Luke, if you get the better of me, I will ask you nothing for this favour.”*

In conclusion we give a celebrated passage from English history, which is strongly and pleasantly contrasted with the early part of the chapter. It is well known that the king of France was taken prisoner by the Black Prince at the battle of Poitiers. “The day of the batayle at night, the prince made a supper in his lodginge to the frenche kyng, and to the moost parte of the great lordes that were prisoners: the prince made the kynge, and his son, the lorde James of Bourbon, the lorde John D’Artois, the erle of Tancarville, the erle D’Estampes, the erle Dampmertyne, the erle of Gravyll, and the lorde of Pertenay, to syt all at one borde, and other lordes, knyghtes, and squiers at other tables; and alwayes the prince served before the kyng as humbly as he coude, and wolde nat syt at the kynges borde, for any desyre that the kynge could make: but sayd he was nat sufficient to syt at the table with so great a prince as the kyng was; but than he sayd to the kyng, Sir, for goddes sake make none yvell, nor heavy chere, though god this day dyd not consent to folowe your wyll: for syr, surely the kyng my father shall bere you as moche honour and amyte as he may do, and shall acorde with you so reasonably that ye shall ever be frendes toguyder after; and sir, methinke ye ought to reioyse, though the journey† be nat as ye wolde have had it, for this day ye have wonne the hygh renome of prowes, and have past this day in valyantnesse all other of your partie: sir, I say natte this to mocke you, for alle that be on our partie that saw every mannes dedes are playnly acorded by true sentence to gyve you the price and chapelette. Therewith the frenchemen began to murmure, and sayd among themselves how the prince had spoken nobly; and that by all estimation he shulde prove a noble man, if Gode send him lyfe, to perceyver in such good fortune. Whan supper was done, every

* Lib. iv. † Fr. journée—though the day has not gone, &c.

man went to his lodgyng with their prisoners : the same night they put many to raunsome, and beleyyved them upon their faythes and trouthes, and raunsomed them but easily, for they sayde, *they wolde sette no knyghts raunsom so hygh, but that he might pay at his ease and mayntaygne still his degree.*

“The same wynter the prince of Wales, and such of Englande as were with him at Bardeaux, ordayned for shippes, to convey the frenche king and his son and all other prisoners into Englande. Then he took the see, and certayne lordes of Gascoyne with hym : the frenche kyng was in a vessell by hymselfe, to be the more at hys ease, accompanied with two hundred men at arms, and two thousand archers : for it was showed the prince that the thre estates, by whom the realme of France was governed, had layed in Normandy and Crotoy two great armyes to the entent to mete with hym, and to gette the frenche kyng out of his handes if they might : but there were no such that apered, and yet thei were on the see xi dayes, and on the xii day they aryved at Sandwyche ; then they yssued out of their shyppe, and lay there all that nyghte, and taryed there two dayes to refresh them ; and on the therde day they rode to Canterbury. When the kynge of Englande knew of their commynge, he commaunded them of London to prepare theym, and their cyte, to receyve suche a man as the frenche kyng was : then they of London arrayed themselfe, by companies, and the chief maisters clothing different fro the other ; at saynt Thomas of Canterbury the frenche kyng and the prince made their offerynges, and there taryed a day, and than rode to Rochester, and taryed there that day, and the next day to Dartforde, and the fourth day to London, wher they were honourably receyved, and so they were in every good towne as they passed : the frenche kynge rode through London on a whyte courser, well aparelled, and the prince on a lyttell black hobbey by hym : thus he was conveyed along the cyte till he came to the Savoy, the which house pertayned to the heritage of the duke of Lancaster ; there the frenche kynge kept hys house a long season, and

thyder came to se hym the kyng and the quene offtimes, and made him great feest and chere."*

It has been said that the Prince's conduct was too ostentatiously humble; that in refusing to sit at table with the King of France, and in making him the principal object of attention in their entry into London, he exceeded the modesty of a conqueror, and exposed himself to the charge of hypocrisy. The censure is, we think, erroneous, and arises from ignorance of the feelings of the times. The humility of the Black Prince was that of a vassal in presence of his feudal lord, due, not because he owed allegiance to the King of France, but because that monarch was the peer of the King of England, and in courtesy entitled, especially as a visitor, though a forced one, to an equal measure of respect from his subjects. The victor merely overlooked the fortune of war, and paid to his royal prisoner the homage which he would have shown to his father, and which the King of France would have received from the heir to his own crown.

* Lord Berners's Froissart, vol. i. chap. 168, 169, 173.

EXTRACT FROM THE LIFE OF MESSIRE BERTRAND DU GUESCLIN.

(Referred to in the Note, p. 104.)

“ONE day the Prince of Wales was risen from dinner, and gone into a private chamber with his barons, who had been served with wine and spices. So they began to speak of many a bold deed of arms, of love-passages, of battles, and of prisons, and how St. Louis to save his life was made prisoner in Tunis, from whence he was ransomed for fine gold, paid down by weight. Until the Prince, who spoke without caution, said, ‘When a good knight well approved in battle is made prisoner in fair feat of arms, and has rendered himself, and sworn to abide prisoner, he should on no account depart without his master’s leave. And also one should not demand such portion of his substance, that he be unable to equip himself again.’ When the Sire de Lebret heard these words, he began to take heed, and said to him, ‘Noble Sire, be not angry with me if I relate what I have heard said of you in your absence.’ ‘By my faith,’ said the Prince, ‘right little should I love follower of mine sitting at my table, if he heard said a word against my honour, and apprised me not of it.’ ‘Sire,’ said he of Lebret, ‘men say that you hold in prison a knight whose name I well know, whom you dare not delyver.’ ‘It is true,’ said Oliver de Clisson, ‘I have heard speak of it.’ Then the Prince swore and boasted, ‘that he knew no knight in the world, but, if he were his prisoner, he would put him to a fair ransom, according to his ability.’ And Lebret said, ‘How then do you forget Bertrand du Guesclin, that he cannot get away?’ And when the Prince heard this, his colour changed; and he was so tempted by pride, anger,

and disdain, that he commanded Bertrand to be brought before him ; with whom he wished to make terms, in spite of all who had spoken of the matter, and would fain not let him be ransomed, unless they themselves should fix the amount. Then certain knights went and found Bertrand, who, to amuse himself and forget his weariness, was talking with his chamberlain. Which knights saluted him. And Bertrand arose towards them, and showed a fair seeming, saying ' that they were come in good time.' Then he ordered the aforesaid chamberlain to bring wine. The knights answered ' that it was right fitting they should have much wine, good and strong ; for they brought him good, joyful, and pleasant news with [good will.' Then one of them who was wise and discreet said, ' that the Prince sent for him to appear in his presence, and he thought that he would be ransomed by help of those friends he had at court, who were many.' ' What say you ?' said Bertrand ; ' I have neither halfpenny nor penny, and owe more than ten thousand livres, that have been lent me, which debt has accrued in this city while I have been prisoner.' One of them inquired of him, ' How have you accounted for so much ?' ' I will answer for that,' said Bertrand ; ' I have eaten, drunk, given, and played at dice with it. A little money is soon spent. But if I be set free, I shall soon have paid it : he saves his money, and has it in good keeping, who shall for my help lend me the keys of it.' And an officer who heard him said, ' Sir, you are stout-hearted, it seems to you that every thing which you would have must happen.' ' By my faith,' said Bertrand, ' you are right, for a dispirited man is nothing better than beaten and discomfited.' And the rest said, ' that he was like one enchanted, for he was proof against every shock.' Then he was brought to the chamber where was the Prince of Wales, and with him John Chandos, a true and valiant knight. And had they chosen to believe him, they would long before have disposed of the war : for he gave much good advice. And also there were Oliver de Clisson and other knights, before whom came Bertrand, wearing a grey coat. And

when the Prince saw him, he could not keep from laughing, from the time he saw him. Then he said, 'Well, Bertrand, how fare you?' And Bertrand approached him, bowing a little, and said, 'Sir, when it shall please you, I may fare better: many a day have I heard the rats and mice, but the song of birds it is long since I heard.* I shall hear them when it is your pleasure.' 'Bertrand,' said the Prince, 'that shall be when you will; it will depend only on yourself, so that you will swear, and make true oath, never to bear arms against me, nor these others, nor to assist Henry of Spain. So soon as you will swear this, we will fully set you free, and pay that you owe, and besides give 10,000 florins to equip you anew, if you consent to this; else you shall not go.' 'Sire,' said Bertrand, 'my deliverance then will not come to pass; for before I do so, may I lie by the leg in prison while I live. God willing, I will never be a reproach to my friends. For by Him who made the world, I will serve with my whole heart those whom I have served, and whose I have been from my outset. These are the good King of France, the noble Dukes of Anjou, of Berry, of Burgundy, and of Bourbon; whose I have been, as became me. But so please you, suffer me to go. For you have held me too long in prison, wrongfully and without cause; and I will tell you how I had gone from France, I and my people meaning to go against the Saracens. And so I had promised Hugh de Carvalay, intending to work out my salvation.' 'Why then went you not straight without stopping?' said the Prince. 'I will tell you,' said Bertrand in a loud voice. 'We found Peter,—the curse of God confound him! who had long since thrice falsely murdered his noble Queen, born of the noble line of Bourbon, and of the blood of my Lord, St. Louis, which lady

* This expression will remind the reader of a favourite saying of the "Good Sir James" Douglas, the companion of Robert Bruce's dangers, that "It is better to hear the lark sing, than the mouse cheep:" meaning that he would never shut himself up in a castle while he could keep the open field.

was your cousin by the best blood in your body. Straightway then I stopped, to take vengeance for her, and to help Henry ; for well I know, and surely I believe, that he is the right king and the true heir of Spain. And also to destroy, and put to an end, Jews and Saracens, of whom there are too many in these parts. Now through great pride you have come to Spain to the best of your ability, both through covetousness of gold and silver, and that you may have the throne after the death of Peter, who reigns wrongfully, by which journey you have, in the first place, injured your own blood, and troubled me and my people : whence it has come to pass, that after you have so ruined your friends, and you and your people have been all famished, and suffered great pain and labour, Peter has deceived you by cheating and trickery, for he has not kept faith nor covenant with you, for which, by my faith, I thank him heartily.' When Bertrand had related his reasons, the Prince rose, and could not help saying that on his soul Bertrand was right, and the barons said that he had spoken truth. Then was there great joy stirring all round and about, and they said of Bertrand, one to another, 'See there a brave Breton.' But the Prince called, and said to him, 'You shall not escape me without paying a good ransom ; and yet it vexes me that you obtain such favour. But men say that I keep you prisoner because I fear you ; and to the end that every one may cease to suspect this, and may know that I neither fear nor care for you, I will deliver you on payment of sufficient ransom.' 'Sir,' said Bertrand, 'I am a poor knight of little name, and not so born as that I should find help in plenty. And besides, my estate is mortgaged for purchase of war-horses, and also I owe in this town full ten thousand florins. Be moderate, therefore, and deliver me.' 'Where will you go, fair Sir ?' said the Prince. 'Sir,' said Bertrand, 'I will go where I may regain my loss, and more I say not.' 'Consider then,' said the Prince, 'what ransom you will give me : for what you will shall be enough for me.' 'Sir,' said Bertrand, 'I trust you will not stoop to retract your meaning. And since you are content to refer it to my

pleasure, I ought not to value myself too low. So I will give and engage for my freedom one hundred thousand double golden florins.' And when the Prince heard him his colour changed, and he looked round at his knights, saying, 'Does he mean to make game of me that he offers such a sum? for I would gladly quit him for the quarter.' 'Bertrand,' said he, 'neither can you pay it, nor do I wish such a sum; so consider again.' 'Sire,' said Bertrand, 'since you will not so much, I place myself at sixty thousand double florins; you shall not have less, sobeit you will discharge me.' 'Well,' said the Prince, 'I agree to it.' Then said Bertrand loudly, 'Sir, Prince Henry may well and truly vaunt that he will die King of Spain, cost him what it may, and he will lend me one half my ransom, and the King of France the other; and if I can neither go nor send to these two, I would get all the spinstresses in France to spin it rather than that I should remain longer in your hands.*' And when the Prince had heard him he thus said: 'What sort of man is this? He startles at nothing, either in act or thought, no more than if he had all the gold which is in the world. He has set himself at sixty thousand double florins, and I would willingly have quitted him for ten thousand.' And all the barons also marvelled greatly. 'Am I then at liberty?' said the gallant Bertrand. And Chandos asked him whence the money should come. 'Sir,' said he, 'I have good friends, as I shall find, I am certain.' 'By my faith,' said Chandos, 'I am much rejoiced therefore, and if you have need of my help, thus much I say, I will lend you ten thousand.' 'Sir,' said Bertrand, 'I thank you. But before I seek anything of you I will try the people of my own country.' The news of this matter went through the city of Bordeaux. There you might see all persons, great and small, citizens, and artisans of all sorts, run towards the mansion of the Prince to see Bertrand. And when the Prince's knights saw the people assemble thus, and

* Si le gagneroie aincois a filler toutes les fillereses qui en France sont, que ce que je demourasse plus entre vos mains.

knew the cause of their coming, they brought the said Bertrand to lean out at a window, who laughed heartily at the matter. And when the commoners saw him from a distance, they said, 'He is a downright enemy! cursed be the hour that he escapes alive. He has done much evil, and will do worse.' And others said, 'Have we idled and yawned, and run away from our business, to look at such a squire as this? May God bless him not! for he is an ugly fellow, and unable to pay the ransom at which he is valued.' 'Whence should he draw it?' said others; 'he will never pay a single penny of his own, but will pilfer it through the broad land.' And those who knew Bertrand better said to them, 'Now argue not so much in using such words, for there is no better knight in the world, and none that better knows how to make war. And there is no castle, however strong, however high the rock on which it stands, that would not soon surrender if he went thither to assault it: and, throughout the kingdom of France, there is no man nor woman, however poor, who would not contribute, if he needed it, rather than that he should remain in prison.'"*

* Hist. du Messire Bertrand du Guesclin.



CHAPTER IV.

Tyranny of Cambyses, terminating in madness—of Caligula
—of the Emperor Paul.

No questions which can become the subject of judicial examination are more delicate and difficult than those which depend upon a man's mental sanity, whether the case be of a civil or a criminal nature ; whether it regard his competence to manage his own affairs, or his possession of that moral feeling of right and wrong in the absence of which he cannot be justly punished as a responsible agent. In the first instance, daily experience shows us that general eccentricity, and even delusion upon particular subjects, may exist in union with the most acute perception of personal interests ; in the second, it is equally clear that the moral sense may be perverted upon one or more points without being destroyed, and indeed without any other indication of mental disease. We may take as an example of this the burning of York Cathedral some years ago. Martin believed this to be morally a meritorious act, and herein lay his madness : on a case of murder, robbery, or any other infraction of the laws, he would have judged aright. But though he believed it to be meritorious, he knew it to

be illegal ; he knew that he was subject to punishment, and fled from it accordingly : and upon this ground the question might be raised, whether his madness should have protected him from the penalty affixed to his act. But exclusively of those more strongly marked cases, which alone are likely to become subjects of judicial inquiry, no man can converse extensively with the living, or, through the medium of books, with the dead, without continually asking himself whether the eccentricity, perverseness, intemperance, and extravagance which he sees on all sides are compatible with a perfectly sound state of mind. Mental as well as bodily illness may assume all shapes, and be of all degrees : and both reflection and observation lead us to conclude that excessive indulgence of the passions will impair the understanding, as surely as sensual intemperance injures the constitution. It would not be difficult to enumerate a long list of causes tending more or less to unsettle the reason ; indeed, no pursuit, however unexciting it may seem, can be exclusively followed without risk of this result. Science has its dangers as well as love : the philosopher's stone and the quadrature of the circle have probably turned as many heads as has female ingratitude, from the time of Orlando Furioso downwards. At present, however, we mean to confine ourselves to one particular manifestation of insanity, or something nearly allied to it, with the view of illustrating, in some degree, that large portion of history which is occupied by the crimes and follies of absolute monarchs.

In reading such narratives as the following, we naturally wonder how it is that anything human can have been led to play a part so entirely at variance with all the kindly feelings of human nature. To believe that Caligula and Nero came into the world fully prepared for the part which they were afterwards to play, would be as unreasonable as to adopt the other extreme, and maintain, as some have done, that the tempers and abilities of all men are originally similar and equal. But "the child is father of the man." The work of education begins at an early period, and circumstances seemingly

too trivial to notice, may exert a powerful effect in fixing our future destiny for good or evil. There are few persons whose patience has not been more or less tried by spoiled children, and who cannot point out examples where the temper of the mature man has been seriously injured by early injudicious indulgence; and many must know cases in which the paroxysms of a naturally bad temper, exasperated by uncontrolled licence and habitual submission, have amounted almost to occasional insanity. Causes closely analogous to those which render one man the dread of his domestic circle, may render another the terror and the scourge of half the earth. The same spirit which vents itself in ill-humour for a broken piece of china, or execrations for an ill-cooked dinner, if fostered by power, might correct breaches of etiquette with the knout, and deal out confiscations and death as unsparingly as oaths. We may observe that, bloody and unfeeling as their administration may have been, it is not among the adventurers who have carved their own way to a crown that the wantonness of tyranny has been most developed; it is rather among their descendants, men nurtured among parasites, with the prospect of despotism ever before their eyes. Surrounded from infancy by those whose interest it has been to pamper, not to repress their evil passions, taught, in Pagan countries, to regard themselves as gods, and worshipped as such by a servile and besotted multitude, what wonder that they tread under foot those who bow the neck before them, and scorn to sympathise with a confessedly inferior race? In private life, however, the regulation of the mind may be neglected, the supremacy of law, and the knowledge that excess, beyond a certain point, cannot be committed with impunity, exerts a salutary restraint over the wildest spirits. But he who is above the influence of fear, whose angry passions have never been checked, nor his desires controlled, and who is harassed by the craving after excitement consequent upon satiety of sensual pleasures, is prepared for any caprice or enormity which the humour of the moment may suggest. The mind can hardly be thus morally

depraved without becoming intellectually depraved also : as the animal man is cherished, and the reasonable man neglected, the former will assume the guidance due to the latter, and human becomes little superior to brute nature, except in its greater power to do mischief. In this state of degradation

Even-handed justice
Condemns the ingredients of the poisoned chalice
To our own lips.

The dominion of the passions is worse than external oppression, and conscience exasperates, after it has lost its power to reform. Misery may then complete the ruin which intemperance began, and cruelty, from being only indifferent, become congenial.

If a man deprives himself almost of the common necessities of life, for the purpose of accumulating money which he will never use or want ; if he sleeps all day, and wakes all night ; if he chooses to wear his shoes upon his hands, and his gloves upon his feet, or indulge in any other such ridiculous fancies ; we call him odd, eccentric, a madman, according to the degree of his deviation from established usages : and justly, for in all these things a sound mind is wanting. Yet that man may be perfectly able to foresee the consequences of his actions, perfect master of his reason upon every subject ; and therefore be both legally and morally responsible. It is a state of mind strictly analogous, as we believe, to this, which has produced the worst excesses of the worst oppressors ; and one which has sprung from the same cause—habitual submission to the will instead of the reason. From the childish passion of George II., who manifested his displeasure on great occasions by kicking his hat about the room, to the super-human crimes of Caligula, we find this disease, if we may call it so, manifested in every variety of degree and form. In Henry VIII. of England, we trace it in the contrast between the early and later years of his reign, in the increased violence of his passions, and in the capriciousness and cruelty ingrafted on a temper not

naturally ungentle. We ascribe to it the ungovernable fury which obscured the brilliant qualities of Peter of Russia ; and we find it still more strongly marked in the extravagances which are ascribed to Xerxes. His very preparations for invading Greece, on a scale so disproportionate to the value of his object if attained, show how subordinate was his judgment to his inclinations ; and no one can read the narration of his chastisement of the Hellespont, without recognising the weakness of a mind unsettled by extravagant presumption. " When Xerxes heard that his bridges were carried away, he was much vexed, and ordered three hundred lashes to be given to the Hellespont, and a pair of fetters to be cast into it. And I have heard that he sent men at the same time to brand the Hellespont. Moreover, he commanded those that inflicted the stripes to use unholy and barbarian language, saying, 'Thou bitter water, thy master inflicts this punishment upon thee, because thou hast wronged him, having received no injury at his hands. And King Xerxes will cross thee, whether thou wilt or no : and, as is fit, no one sacrifices to thee, because thou art a salt and crafty river.' So he ordered them to punish the sea thus, and to cut off the heads of the Grecians who had charge of the bridge."* This is as downright frenzy as the walls of Bedlam ever witnessed : a paroxysm of temporary insanity, produced by disappointment acting on a vain, ungoverned mind.

Before proceeding to relate in detail the lives of some remarkable persons which bear upon the point in question, we wish briefly to allude to the very singular and striking history of Nebuchadnezzar, though with no view of resolving that preternatural visitation, which is expressly stated to have been from God, into a natural consequence of his intemperate pride. From the few notices of him preserved in the Bible, he seems to have been a man cast in no ordinary mould ; to have been endowed with powers and capability of excellence commensurate with the exalted situation which he was ap-

* Herod. vii. 35.

pointed to hold. It is evident, however, that he had drunk deep of the intoxication of despotism. His intended massacre of the wise men, and the Chaldeans, in point of wisdom and justice is on a par with the anger of a child who beats his nurse because she will not give him the moon to play with ; and his conduct with respect to the image of the plain of Dura, if less preposterous, is not more creditable to his notions of toleration or humanity. In fact, he appears to have been in a fair way to become as truculent a tyrant as Cambyses or Caligula, when that awful vision, related at length in the fourth chapter of Daniel, was presented to him, which foretold his banishment from the throne and from men : and we may infer from the warning of the inspired interpreter, and from the course of the narrative, that his overweening pride and hardness of heart, the food and origin of that mental alienation of which we have been speaking at such length, were the vices against which Divine anger was especially directed. “ This is the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord the king : They shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor : if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spoke and said, Is not this the great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty ? While the word was in the king’s mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken ; the kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field ; they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that

the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.”*

Of the following sketches the two first exhibit the dominion of passion in its most violent form; the last differs rather in degree than in nature. Strictly speaking, the life of Cambyses is not entitled to a place here; but Herodotus makes us so familiar with Persian history from the time of Cyrus, that it seems naturally to find a place in works relating to the history of Greece.

Cambyses succeeded to the undisturbed possession of that vast empire which his father Cyrus had acquired, extending from the Indus to the Ægean, and from the Caspian to the Red Sea. This extent of dominion might seem enough to satisfy the most ambitious, and employ the most active mind; but the son, unhappily for himself, inherited the father's military spirit, and in the fourth year of his reign quitted his paternal kingdom to conquer Egypt. He marched along the coast from Palestine to Pelusium, where he found encamped Psammenitus, who had succeeded his father Amasis on the Egyptian throne. A battle was fought, in which the Egyptians were defeated; they fled to Memphis, and the rest of the country submitted without further struggle. Herodotus, who visited the field of battle, relates a curious story. The bones of either nation were heaped apart, as they had been originally separated; and the Persian skulls were so weak that you could throw a pebble through them, whereas the Egyptian would hardly break, though beaten with a large stone. Their descendants do not appear to have degenerated in this respect.

Cambyses sent a ship of Mitylene up the Nile, to summon Memphis to surrender. The savage and exasperated inhabitants tore the herald and crew limb from limb, and made a long defence, during which the Cyrenæans and the neighbouring Libyans submitted. The city being at last taken, he put Psammenitus to a singular trial.

“On the tenth day after the capture of Memphis, he

* Daniel, iv. 24, 25, 27, 29—32.

placed Psammenitus, together with other Egyptians, without the gates; and meaning to make essay of his temper, he acted thus. He clothed that king's daughter in servile raiment, and sent her, bearing a water-pitcher, to fetch water, and with her other maidens of the noblest families similarly clad. And as they went with wailing and lamentation past their fathers, these, all but Psammenitus, re-echoed their cries, seeing the evil condition of their children; but he bowed his head to the earth. When they had passed, his son came by with two thousand Egyptians of like age, with bits in their mouths, and their necks bound with halters, who were thus led to death in retaliation for the Mityleneans who were slain at Memphis. For the royal judges had decided that for every one of them ten of the noblest Egyptians should perish. And he, seeing them pass, and knowing that his son was carried to execution, while his countrymen who were around him wept and were much distressed, did as in the case of his daughter. When they were gone, an old man, who was formerly of his drinking parties, being now deprived of his fortune, and compelled to beg through the army, chanced to come where Psammenitus was sitting; and Psammenitus, when he saw his friend, cried aloud, and smote his head, calling upon him by name. Men were placed near, who told Cambyses every thing that happened; and he was much surprised, and sent this message: 'Psammenitus, your master Cambyses asks why, having given way neither to cries nor tears when you saw your daughter maltreated and your son going to execution, you have honoured with them a man nowise related to you?' He answered, 'Son of Cyrus, my domestic misfortunes were too mighty to be wept; but the sufferings of a friend, who, on the threshold of old age, has fallen from a high and happy state into beggary, form a fit subject for tears.' '* The heart of Cambyses was touched for once, and he ordered the Egyptian prince to be sought and saved; but his mercy came too late.

* Herod. iii. 14

Proceeding from Memphis to Sais, he broke open the tomb of Amasis, the late king, and caused the body, which was embalmed as usual, to be scourged, and insulted in every possible way.* Finally, he ordered it to be burnt, wherein he transgressed equally the religion of the Persians and Egyptians. For the former say that it is not fit to consign a dead man to a divinity, esteeming fire as such; while the latter believe it to be a savage animal, which consumes every thing within its reach, and then dies; and consider it unlawful to let their corpses be the prey of wild beasts. Hence the practice of embalming, that worms may not prey upon their flesh. This wanton and disgusting outrage was prompted by personal hatred, arising from a slight said to have been put upon him by Amasis, in consequence of which the invasion of Egypt was undertaken.

That country being subdued, far from being contented with his acquisitions, he now meditated three expeditions at once: one against Carthage, which was frustrated by the Phœnicians, who composed the chief part of his fleet, refusing to serve against their kinsmen and descendants; another against the Ammonians, who lived in the Libyan desert, in a spot made famous by the oracle of Ammon;† a third against the Æthiopians, called Macrobiani, or long-lived, who were said to be the tallest and handsomest of all men, and to reach the age of 120 years and upwards. The monarchy was elective, and they chose for their king whoever was most eminent for strength and stature. Before he set out, Cambyses sent spies into this country, charged with gifts and professions of friendship, to which the Æthiopian replied, "The king of Persia has not sent you with gifts, as setting a high price on my alliance; and you speak falsely, for you

* The body of Cromwell was taken from the grave, exposed on a gibbet, and finally buried under the gallows, and this in the gay and polished reign of Charles II., who had not even the poor excuse for this despicable revenge which the Persian king's unbridled passions may supply.

† The modern Siwah.

are come as spies of my realm. Neither is that man upright, for then he would covet none other country than his own, and not have enslaved those from whom he has had no wrong. Give to him, then, this bow, and say, 'The king of the Æthiopians advises the king of the Persians to invade the long-lived Æthiopians with overpowering numbers, as soon as the Persians can draw thus easily such bows as these; and, until then, to thank the gods who have not inclined the sons of the Æthiopians to add the lands of others to their own.'”*

Cambyses, as we may suppose, flew into no small passion at the receipt of such an answer, and urged his march, says Herodotus, like one out of his right mind, and too impetuously to wait until magazines could be formed,—a precaution the more needful, because, according to the prevalent notions of geography, he was going to the uttermost parts of the earth. From Thebes he detached 50,000 men to enslave the Ammonians, and burn the temple of Ammon, while he advanced towards Æthiopia with the rest: but before one-fifth of the journey was accomplished, all their food was consumed, even to the beasts of burden which attended the camp. “If, when he found this out, he had changed his mind, and brought home his army, then, bating the original fault, he would have been a wise man. But, instead of this, he pressed continually forward, without any consideration.”

The consequence of this improvident obstinacy was, that his soldiers, who had lived on herbs so long as the earth produced anything, began to live upon each other when they reached the sandy desert. Cambyses had no relish for this sort of supper, whether he was to eat, or, like Polonius, to be eaten, and at length turned back, not before he had lost a large part of his army. The other detachment advanced deep into the desert, whence they returned not, nor was it known what became of them. The Ammonians said that a mighty south-west wind had overwhelmed them with sand. The circum-

stances of their supposed destruction are powerfully though rather extravagantly described by Darwin:—

“Now o’er their head the whizzing whirlwinds breathe,
And the live desert pants and heaves beneath;
Tinged by the crimson sun, vast columns rise
Of eddying sands, and war amid the skies,
In red arcades the billowy plain surround,
And stalking turrets dance upon the ground.
Onward resistless rolls the infuriate surge, :
Clouds follow clouds, and mountains mountains urge ;
Wave over wave the driving desert swims ;
Bursts o’er their heads, inhumes their struggling limbs ;
Man mounts on man, on camels camels rush,
Hosts march o’er hosts, and nations nations crush,—
Wheeling in air the winged islands fall,
And one great earthy ocean covers all !—
Then ceased the storm.—Night bowed his Ethiop brow
To earth, and listened to the groans below.—
Grim Horror shook—awhile the living hill
Heaved with convulsive throes—and all was still !”*

The king returned to Memphis, his army much weakened, and his warlike ardour probably no less cooled, by this double failure ; for he made no more trials to extend his empire. So humiliating a disappointment was not likely to sweeten his arbitrary temper, and to its effects we are inclined to attribute the sudden change which appears to have taken place in his conduct. We say appears, because up to this time nothing is related of his private life : it is not probable, however, that the historian would have omitted occurrences such as those which characterise it from henceforward. The seeds of the evil which now shot up had long been rooting themselves. Self-gratification had been the end, and his will the guide, of his actions ; and on such persons uncontrolled power acts like a hot-bed, to draw up their bad qualities into tenfold rankness. Old tales make frequent mention of magicians being torn in pieces by the spirits whom they have called up. He who gives loose to the evil passions of his nature, has a worse set of fiends to

* Botanic Garden, v. 473.

deal with, than the grotesque imaginations of our forefathers ever figured, and will find it harder to escape from them in safety: what wonder is it if the reason proves unequal to bear the shocks of such a warfare? That the mind of Cambyses so yielded, the cruelty, impiety, and extravagance of his latter years, in which his conduct was as impolitic as wicked, will not allow us to doubt. Disappointment and vexation could not have produced the disorder, though they may have hastened the crisis and increased its violence.

The Egyptians referred this change to another cause. When Cambyses reached Memphis he found the city in great joy. Apis,* the sacred bull, one of their most venerated deities, had just appeared, and, as usual, the whole country celebrated it as a festival. The despot suspected, not unnaturally, that they were rejoicing over his defeat, and sent for the magistrates, to ask why the Egyptians, who had done nothing of the sort when he was before at Memphis, made such show of joy, now that he came there after losing his army. They replied, that their god, who was wont to appear at long intervals, had manifested himself, and that on this occasion the Egyptians always kept holiday. Cambyses said they lied, and therefore sent them to execution. He next sent for the priests, and being similarly answered, said that he would soon know whether any tame god was come among the Egyptians. At his command, the animal was produced; he drew his dagger, struck Apis in the thigh, and said, laughing, "Fools, are such things gods, composed of flesh and blood and penetrable to

* Apis was a black calf, with a square white spot on its forehead, the figure of an eagle on its back, a double tuft of hair on its tail, and the figure of the cantharus, the sacred beetle, under its tongue. When an animal bearing these marks was found, or manufactured, the birth of Apis was announced to the people, a temple was built on the spot, where he was fed for four months, and after various ceremonies he was finally conveyed to Memphis, where he spent the rest of his life in a splendid palace, receiving divine honours.

steel? He is indeed a god worthy of the Egyptians! For you, you shall not make a mock of me with impunity." So saying, he ordered the priests to be scourged, and all persons found celebrating the feast to be slain. Apis died, and was buried secretly. From this sacrilege the Egyptians dated the madness of Cambyzes. Others ascribed it to epilepsy, to which he is said to have been subject from his birth. The disease might have produced a liability to insanity, but it could scarcely have been the agent in working so sudden a change. The extravagances of Caligula, however, were referred by many to the same cause.

The change in his temper was first shown by the murder of his brother Smerdis, whom he had sent back to Susa in a fit of jealousy because he was the only man in the army who could draw the King of Ethiopia's bow, even for two fingers' breadth. After taking this step, he dreamed that a messenger came to him from Persia, with tidings that Smerdis sat upon the throne, and touched the heavens with his head. Fearing, therefore, that this vision portended his being deposed and murdered, he sent a trusty follower, named Prexaspes, to Susa, with orders to assassinate his brother. The commission was faithfully performed.

A sister also, who had followed him into Egypt, and with whom he cohabited, fell a victim to his intemperate passion. "Before this time," Herodotus says, "the Persians never married their sisters, but he, wishing to do so, managed it thus. Knowing that he was about to act contrary to their customs, he sent for the royal judges, and asked them if there were any law permitting any one who wished to cohabit with his sister. Now the royal judges are select men among the Persians, who retain their office during life, or till convicted of some injustice; and it is they who preside in the Persian courts and interpret the laws and institutions of the nation, and all things are referred to them. So to this question of Cambyzes they returned an answer that was both just and safe, saying that they could find no law permitting a brother to marry his sister; but they had indeed dis-

covered another—that it was lawful for the king of the Persians to do whatever he liked. Thus, then, they did not break the law from fear of Cambyses; and yet, lest they should themselves perish out of regard for the law, they found another law to help him in marrying his sister.”* Cambyses and his judges seem to have been well suited. There is on record a better instance of courtly evasion, related by Waller. The poet went, on the day of a dissolution of parliament, to see the King, James II., at dinner. “Dr. Andrews, Bishop of Winchester, and Dr. Neal, Bishop of Durham, were standing behind his majesty’s chair, and there happened something in the conversation these prelates had with the King on which Mr. Waller did often reflect. His majesty asked the bishops, ‘My lords, cannot I take my subjects’ money when I want it, without all this formality in parliament?’ The Bishop of Durham readily answered, ‘God forbid, sire, but you should! You are the breath of our nostrils.’ Whereupon the King turned and said to the Bishop of Winchester, ‘Well, my lord, what say you?’ ‘Sire,’ replied the bishop, ‘I have no skill to judge of parliamentary cases.’ The King replied, ‘No put-offs, my lord—answer me presently.’ ‘Then, sire,’ said he, ‘I think it is lawful for you to take my brother Neal’s money, for he offers it.’”†

It was another sister who followed Cambyses into Egypt, and perished there by his violence. She was present when he set a lion’s whelp to fight a puppy. The latter had the worst, till another of the same litter broke loose, and came to help it, when the two together beat the lion. The princess shed tears at the sight, and being questioned why she did so, replied that it was for the remembrance of Smerdis, and the thought that there was no one to avenge his death. The brute kicked her, and thereby inflicted a mortal injury.

He held Prexaspes, the person employed to murder Smerdis, in especial favour, and among other marks of it

* iii. 31.

, † Preface to Waller’s Poems, Lond. 1711.

appointed that nobleman's son to be his cup-bearer. One day he asked, "Prexaspes, what sort of person do the Persians think me?" He replied with unseasonable candour, "that they praised him very highly, only they said that he was terribly fond of wine." Cambyses was very angry at the imputation. "Do the Persians," he answered, "say that I am beside myself for love of wine? You shall see whether they speak the truth, or whether it is they that are beside themselves when they talk thus. If I cleave your son's heart with my arrow as he stands without the door, then the Persians will be proved to talk nonsense: if I miss, then say that the Persians speak truth, and it is I that am mad." He drew his bow, the boy fell, and he commanded that he should be opened: the arrow was found fixed in his heart. He turned to the father and said, laughing, "Prexaspes, I have made it clear to you that the Persians are mad, and not I. Now tell me whether you have seen any man who shot so well?" The miserable wretch, fearing for his own safety, replied that not even a god could have done so well.

Cræsus, who was kept in attendance in his court, as before in Cyrus's, ventured to remonstrate on the course which he was pursuing, but so unsuccessfully, that nothing but a rapid flight saved him from furnishing another proof of Cambyses' skill in archery. He was then ordered to execution, but the officers who had charge of him, knowing the value that their master set upon Cræsus, and expecting rewards for saving his life, concealed him until the king's anger should be over. One day at length they produced him, when Cambyses was expressing his regret for the Lydian's death. It is dangerous to calculate upon a madman's conduct. The king said that he was very glad Cræsus was preserved, and put the officers to death for disobeying his orders.

He had now been absent from Persia three years nearly, when a revolt broke out; the natural consequence of so long a desertion of the seat of empire, especially under a despotic government; in which case the people, habituated implicitly to submit to those in

authority, care little from what head that authority emanates, provided it is conveyed through the customary channels. On leaving Persia, Cambyzes had appointed Patizeithes, a Magian, or one of the hereditary priesthood, to be steward or inspector of the royal household. This man probably possessed rank and influence, as, under all monarchies, the nobility have been eager to fill even menial offices about the royal person; perhaps his station gave him political importance, as in France, under the Merovingian dynasty, the Maires du Palais wielded the whole power of the state. He had a brother named Smerdis, closely resembling in person Smerdis the son of Cyrus; and knowing both that the latter was dead, and that the fact of his death was carefully concealed from the nation, he conceived a plan, founded probably on the reputed madness and necessary unpopularity of Cambyzes, for dethroning him, and substituting his own brother as the son of Cyrus. The attempt seems to have succeeded without opposition: for the historian merely states that he set his brother on the throne, and sent heralds throughout the empire, to say that in future obedience was to be paid to Smerdis, son of Cyrus, and not to Cambyzes. The herald sent into Egypt found the latter with his army in Syria, and (a service of no small danger) boldly delivered his message to the king in public. On this occasion the madman behaved reasonably, for instead of killing Prexaspes and the herald in the first instance, and then proceeding to inquire how Smerdis came to be alive, he began by investigating, and soon perceived the real state of the case. The true meaning of the dream already referred to then struck him, in which he saw a messenger from Susa, who told him that Smerdis sat upon the throne, and reached the heavens with his head. Some remnant of kindly feeling and remorse now touched his heart, and he wept to think that he had destroyed his brother to no purpose; but this soon gave way to a natural anger, and with his usual precipitation he would instantly have departed to assert his own empire, and punish the conspirators. But as he sprung to horse the button dropped

off which closed the end of his scabbard ; and the naked point pierced his thigh, the spot in which he had sacrilegiously wounded Apis. He thought that the injury was mortal, and asked the name of the city where he then was. It was called Ecbatana,* and in Ecbatana an oracle had forewarned him he should die ; but he naturally interpreted it of the more celebrated Ecbatana, the residence of the ancient Median kings. When he heard the name he was sobered, and comprehending the oracle aright, said “ Here then Cambyzes, son of Cyrus, is destined to end his life.”† The wound mortified, and on the twentieth day after the accident he sent for the most eminent of his countrymen, and addressed them in these words : “ Men of Persia, I am now forced to de-

* A Syrian city ; its site is not clearly ascertained. Cambyzes seems to have been at this time on his route home.

† *K. Henry.* Doth any name particular belong
Unto the lodging where I first did swoon ?
Warw. 'Tis called Jerusalem, my noble lord.
K. Henry. Laud be to God !—even there my life must
end.

It hath been prophesied to me many years
I should not die, but in Jerusalem,
Which vainly I supposed the Holy Land :—
But bear me to that chamber ; there I'll lie.
In that Jerusalem shall Harry die.

King Henry IV. Part 2, iv. 4.

The ground work of this passage is to be found in Holinshed ; and the same tale is told in Fabyan's Chronicles, and in Restell's Pastime of Pleasure. The latter writers state it without any appearance of doubt. But Holinshed uses a degree of caution not very common in a chronicler of that time : “ Whether this was true that so he spake, as one that gave too much credit to foolish prophecies and vain tales, or whether it was fained, as in such cases it commonly happeneth, we leave it to the advised reader to judge.” The advised reader will probably hesitate little in adopting the latter conclusion ; especially as the same tale is told of other persons. See the notes to Shakspeare, in the edition of 1821. The actors and the scenes differ in the different cases ; but the equivoque arises in all upon the name “ Jerusalem.”

clare to you what I have hitherto concealed most carefully. For, being in Egypt, I saw in my sleep a vision which I would fain never have seen, and thought a messenger from home brought word that Smerdis sat upon the throne, and reached the heavens with his head. Fearing, therefore, to be deposed by my brother, I did more hastily than wisely, for it is not in man's nature to turn aside that which is decreed : but I, fool as I was, sent Prexaspes to Susa to kill Smerdis, and lived in security when this great evil was done, never thinking that, though he was removed, some other person might rise up against me. And thus, being wrong concerning every thing that was to happen, I have needlessly become a fratricide, and yet am equally deprived of my kingdom. For it was Smerdis, the Magian, whose revolt the divinity foretold in my dream. The deed then is done, and be assured that you have no longer Smerdis, son of Cyrus, but the Magi fill the royal office ; he whom I left steward of my household, and Smerdis his brother. He is dead, then, whose part especially it was to avenge the wrongs done to me by the Magi ; dead, impiously murdered by his nearest of kin. And as he is no more, I am compelled to give in charge to you, O Persians, those things which at the end of life I wish to be done. I require of you then, and call the gods of our empire to witness, that you suffer not the sovereignty to revert to the Medes, but if they have obtained it by fraud, by fraud let them be stripped of it ; if by force, by force do you recover it. And as you do this, may your land be fruitful, and your wives and flocks yield increase to you as a free people for ever ; but if you recover not the empire, nor attempt to recover it, I imprecate upon you the reverse of all these things, and further pray that the end of every Persian may be like mine." So saying, he bewailed in tears his whole condition. And when the Persians beheld their king weeping they rent their clothes, and made lamentation unsparingly.* Thus

* Herod, iii. 65.

died Cambyses, in the seventh year and fifth month of his reign.

“The Egyptians, who were horror-struck at the outrage committed upon Apis, and who ascribed the atrocities perpetrated by the Persian monarch to madness, the consequence of this crime, saw in the manner of his death a further manifestation of divine vengeance. Strange inconsistency, that men should believe a deity unable to protect his own person, and yet thus capable of inflicting punishment upon his injurer! In a similar spirit, the death of Cleomenes, King of Sparta, an event attended with remarkable and impressive circumstances, was attributed to no less than four different acts of impiety by different parties, each believing that it was caused by an infringement upon those things which they themselves considered as peculiarly sacred. Cleomenes’ mind was impaired before he ascended the throne, insomuch that his younger brother endeavoured to set aside the strict order of succession in his own favour. We may notice this as a strong proof of what has been said of the efficacy of moral restraint in preserving mental sanity, and checking the progress of existing disease. The strict discipline of Sparta, the subjection of her kings in common with all other citizens, not merely to written law, but to public opinion, was sufficient to restrain the wanderings even of an impaired mind; for though his reign was overbearing and violent, nothing is related of him which can be considered as a proof of madness until towards its close, when he became addicted to drunkenness, a vice especially contrary to the Spartan laws. Being proved to have bribed the priestess to return an answer suitable to his own interests on one occasion when the Spartan government consulted the Delphic oracle, he fled to Thessaly, and from thence to Arcadia, where he employed himself so successfully in stirring up war against Sparta, that he was recalled and reinstated. Shortly after he broke out into frenzy, having been before, says Herodotus, somewhat crazed; and being placed in confinement under the charge of a

Helot, he obtained a sword from his guard, with which he deliberately cut himself into pieces, beginning at the legs and so proceeding upwards, until he reached the vital parts, and died.*

That so tragical an end should excite general attention, that it should be referred to the direct interposition of the Deity to punish some crime, is no wonder: what is chiefly observable, and characteristic of Grecian religion, is that no one thought of attributing the anger of the gods to moral guilt, of which Cleomenes had no lack, but merely to some injury or insult offered especially to the gods themselves. Hence, according to the religious prepossessions of the party speculating, there were four methods current of accounting for his madness. Some time before, when commanding in an invasion of Argolis, he had defeated the opposing army, and driven many of them into a wood sacred to the hero Argus (not he with the many eyes), from whom the Argians traced their descent. Unwilling to lose his prey, he at first enticed them one by one with promises of safety, and when his treachery was discovered, and they refused to quit their asylum, he caused the Helots attendant on the army to surround the grove with dry wood, and burnt it together with the wretches it contained. The Argians then said that the hero Argus thus avenged the pollution and destruction of his grove: the Athenians were equally confident that he was thus afflicted because he had once ravaged the sacred precincts of Eleusis: the other Greeks, who cared comparatively little either for Argus or Ceres, found a sufficient cause in his corruption of the Delphian oracle, which was consulted and venerated

* Loss of sensation or a depraved state of sensation in the extremities, is a common symptom of madness. Where the former exists, it is not uncommon for patients to burn themselves dreadfully, from mere insensibility to the action of fire. The latter is often manifested by a sort of irritation which leads the sufferer to cut and lacerate the hands and feet. These facts, with a little allowance for exaggeration, may do something to explain rather a startling passage.—See Dr. Conolly on Insanity.

by all alike. And the Spartans, bigoted to nothing so much as to their own institutions, probably stumbled upon the truth when they said that there was nothing divine about the business, but that he was driven mad by hard drinking. A similar feeling led the royalists to see something extraordinary in the death of Lord Brooke, who was killed by a musket-shot in the eye, fired from Lichfield Cathedral, while besieging it for the Parliament in 1643. "There were many discourses and observations upon his death, that it should be upon St. Chad's day, being the 2nd of March, by whose name, he being a bishop shortly after the planting of Christianity in this island, that church had anciently been called. And it was reported that in his prayer that very morning (for he used to pray publicly, though his chaplain were in the presence), he wished 'that if the cause he were in were not right and just, he might presently be cut off.' " Others went still further, and observed not only that he was killed in attacking St. Chad's church on St. Chad's day, but that he received his death-wound in the very eye with which he had said he hoped to see the ruin of all the cathedrals in the kingdom. It is observable that the honour of the tutelary saint seems to have been more thought of than that of the Deity.

C. Cæsar Caligula, son of Germanicus and Agrippina, being left an orphan at an early age, passed under the guardianship of his grand-uncle Tiberius, who adopted and declared him his successor. In this critical situation he profited so well by the admirable example of duplicity ever before him, that neither the destruction of his nearest relations, nor even the insults studiously offered to himself, drew from him a complaint, or interrupted his obsequious attentions to the reigning power. It was well said after his accession, in reference to this period, that there never was a better slave or a worse master. But cruelty and licentiousness showed themselves through this mask of milkiness; and the clear-sighted Tiberius, it is said, often predicted that Caligula would live for his own and all men's perdition, and that he was cherishing a serpent against the Roman people, and a Phaeton against

the whole world. If the speech be genuine, the emperor's kind intentions towards others merited that he should be the first victim of his amiable pupil, and such was the case. At the close of his last illness, while he lay in a stupor which was supposed to be death, Macro, the favourite minister, proclaimed Caligula. But he revived—his courtiers slunk away from the new-made monarch, and Caligula in passive terror awaited the consequences of his precipitance, until Macro caused his reviving benefactor to be smothered under the bed-clothes.

The news of a change of masters was received with universal joy, partly from hatred to Tiberius, partly from love to the family of Germanicus; and the early conduct of the young prince was calculated to increase the general attachment. He honoured the ashes of his mother and brothers with a splendid funeral, remitted punishments, discharged all criminal proceedings, professed to have no ears for informers, watched over public morals and the administration of justice, and in all things assumed the semblance of a mild and conscientious monarch. But this affectation of popularity lasted no longer than the caprice or fear which produced it.

The extravagant folly of his nature broke out in the assumption of divinity. This was no new pretension; but he surpassed his predecessors in the extent and absurdity of his claims. He mutilated without remorse the products of Grecian art, by placing his own head upon the images of the gods, without regard either to the beauty or sanctity of the statues which he thus disfigured. He built a temple in his own honour, appointed priests, and laid down a ritual of sacrifice, including only those birds which were most esteemed by the epicures of the day. He assumed the title of Latian Jupiter, and completed the mummery by pretending to hold secret conferences with the Jupiter of the Capitol, in which he was heard threatening to send him back to Greece in disgrace; and was only mollified by the repeated entreaties of the father of gods and men, who invited him to share his own abode, the venerated Capitol.

The Jews of course did not acknowledge his divinity,

which angered him exceedingly, insomuch that he issued an order to erect his own statue in the temple at Jerusalem. At the intercession of Agrippa this edict was recalled, but his anger against the nation still continued, and gave rise to a very curious scene. A deputation of Jews had gone to Rome in order to conduct a dispute between themselves and the Alexandrians. Caligula appointed the parties to come before him at a villa which he had ordered to be thrown open for his inspection. On the introduction of the Jews, "You," he said, "are those fellows who think me no god, though I am acknowledged to be such by all men, and who confess none except that unpronounceable one of yours;" and raising his hands towards heaven, he uttered that word which it was not lawful to hear, far less to speak. The Jews were in despair, while their adversaries jumped and clapped their hands, and accumulated the epithets of all the gods on Caligula. One of them, to improve this advantage, said that the emperor would detest the Jews still more if he knew that they were the only people who had never sacrificed in his behalf. The Jews all exclaimed that it was false—that they had thrice offered hecatombs for his welfare. "Be it so," he answered; "what then? You sacrificed to another, and not to me." All this time he was running over the whole house, up and down stairs, and dragging the poor Jews after, who, besides being in mortal terror, were exposed to the ridicule of all the court. Presently he gave some orders about the building, and then turned to them and said gravely, "But why do you not eat pork?" This was another triumph for their adversaries, who burst into such immoderate laughter that the courtiers began to be shocked. The Jews answered, "that the habits of nations varied. Some persons," they added, "do not eat lamb." "They are right," said the emperor, "it is a tasteless meat." At last he said, rather angrily, "I should like to know on what plea you can justify your city;" and as they entered into a long speech, he ran over the house to give orders about the windows; then returning, he asked again what they had to say, and then, when they began their speech again, ran off to look

at some pictures. Finally he sent them off, with the observation, "These are not such bad fellows after all, but they are great fools for not believing me to be a god."*

No man ever spilt blood more lightly, with more refinement in cruelty, or with less excuse. He had no rivals to fear, no conspiracies to provoke him ; but selfishness seemed to have stifled every humane feeling, and to have left him a prey to the guidance of his evil passions, unrestrained by that natural abhorrence of blood which few even of the worst entirely overcome. To relate one half of his atrocities would weary and disgust the reader : the few here given are selected to show how closely levity was mingled with brutality. He asked one who had been banished by Tiberius, how he employed himself in exile. "I besought the gods that Tiberius might perish, and you be emperor," was the courtly reply. Thinking that those whom he had banished might be similarly employed, he sent persons around the islands of the Mediterranean, the abodes usually prescribed to those unhappy men, commissioned to put all to death. Cowardly as cruel, he was conscious that the prayer merited a hearing, and had superstition to fear, though not religion to venerate or obey. A civil officer of rank, resident for the sake of his health in Anticyra (an island of the Ægean Sea, celebrated for the growth of hellebore), requested the extension of his leave of absence. Caligula answered, "that blood-letting was necessary, where so long a course of hellebore had failed," and sent at the same time an order for his execution. The joke, such as it is, appears to have been the only provocation to this act. Imperial wit need be brilliant if it is to be displayed at so high a price. It was his frequent order to the executioner, whose work he loved to superintend, "Strike so that he may feel himself die." When, by a mistake of name, one man had suffered for another, he observed that both deserved alike ; and here he probably stumbled

* Philo Περὶ Ἀρετῶν. sub fin.

upon a truth. One of his exclamations is notorious : “ Oh that the Roman people had one neck ! ” In a similar spirit he lamented that his reign was distinguished by no public misfortunes—he should be forgotten in the prosperity of the age. It was a mistaken diffidence : he might have trusted in his own powers to avert such a misfortune. Another source of bloodshed was his profuse expenditure. Within a year he spent the treasure left by Tiberius, amounting to twenty-two millions sterling, and then supplied his extravagance by every species of extortion. He abrogated the wills of some, because of their ingratitude in not making his predecessor, or himself, their heir ; those of others he annulled, because witnesses were found to say that they had meant to do so ; and having thus frightened many into appointing him a legatee conjointly with their friends and relations, he said that they were laughing at him, to continue alive after making their wills, and sent poisoned dishes to many of them. And being thus callous, and boastfully indifferent to his subjects’ sufferings, he chose to affect horror when in the savage sports of the amphitheatre one gladiator killed five others, and published an edict to express his abhorrence at the cruelty of those who had endured such a sight.

One instance of his extortion we could pardon. After an exhibition of gladiators, he caused the survivors to be sold by auction. While so employed he observed that one Aponius was dozing in his seat, and turning to the auctioneer, desired him on no account to neglect the biddings of the gentleman who was nodding to him from the benches. Finally thirteen gladiators were knocked down to the unconscious bidder for near 73,000*l*. Among other equally honest and dignified ways of raising money, he sold in Gaul the jewels, servants, and other property, even the very children of his sisters ; and he found this so profitable, that he sent to Rome for the old furniture of the palace, pressing all carriages, public and private, for its conveyance, to the great inconvenience and even distress of the capital. But the sale, we may suppose, went off dully, for the emperor complained loudly of his

subjects' avarice, who were not ashamed to be richer than himself, and affected sorrow at being compelled to alienate the imperial property.

The most ludicrous part of his life is the history of his wars. Being told that his Batavian guards wanted recruiting, he took a sudden whim to make a German campaign, and set out with such speed that he arrived at his head-quarters in Gaul, before the troops could be entirely collected. He now assumed the character of a strict disciplinarian; broke those officers whom his own causeless hurry had made too late; and mingling a due attention to economy with his caprices, deprived 6000 veterans of the pensions due to them. He claimed the conquest of Britain, on the ground of receiving homage from an exiled prince of that island; and having sent a pompous account of this magnificent acquisition to the senate, he proceeded to the Rhine and even crossed it. While marching through a defile, he heard some one observe that the appearance of an enemy at that moment would cause no little confusion. The notion of war in earnest was too much for the descendant of Germanicus and Drusus. He mounted his horse, hurried to recross the river, and rather than wait until an obstructed bridge could be cleared, was passed from hand to hand over the heads of the crowd. Not finding, or rather not seeking a real enemy, he made some Germans of his own army conceal themselves in the forest, and while he was at table caused the approach of an enemy to be hurriedly announced. On this he rushed to horse, galloped with his companions and part of his guard into the next wood, erected a trophy in honour of his exploit, and quickly returned to censure the cowardice of those who had refused to share the danger of their prince. In a similar spirit he sent away some hostages privately, then led the hue and cry to overtake them, and brought them back in fetters as deserters. But his most brilliant exploit was that of giving battle to the ocean. He drew his troops up in line upon the sea-shore, ranged his artillery, machines for throwing large darts and stones, as if against an enemy, and then, while all were wondering

what folly would come next, commanded the soldiers to fill their helmets and pockets with shells, calling them the spoils of the ocean, due to the Capitol and the palace. To celebrate this victory he built a lighthouse, and distributed a hundred denarii to every soldier; and then, as if he had surpassed all former instances of liberality, "Depart," he said, "depart happy and rich."

Such victories deserved a triumph, but there was some difficulty in procuring proper ornaments for the ostentatious ceremony: for his German victories had produced no prisoners, and it does not appear to have occurred to him that the ocean contained fish as well as shells. A live porpoise would have formed a novel and appropriate feature in the procession, and have done honour to his own prowess and to the majesty of the empire. To supply the deficiency he collected a number of Gauls, distinguished by their stature and personal advantages, caused them to let their hair grow, and to dye it red (the characteristics of the German race), and even to learn the German language, and to assume German names. Strange mixture of vanity with disregard of his own character and contempt of the public opinion! The slightest reflection must have shown the futility of these pretences, and the immeasurable littleness of his own behaviour. But so long as he had the pleasure of wearing his borrowed plumes, it seems to have mattered not that the world knew them to be borrowed. In a similar spirit he affected to wear the breast-plate of Alexander the Great. What bitterer satire could his worst enemy have devised?

The capricious variations of his temper exposed his associates to constant danger. At one time he loved company, at another solitude: sometimes the number of petitions made him angry, and sometimes the want of them. He undertook things in the greatest hurry, and executed them with sluggish neglect. To flatter, or to speak truth, was equally dangerous, for sometimes he was in a humour for one and sometimes for the other; so that those who had intercourse with him were equally

at a loss what to do or say, and thanked fortune rather than prudence if they came off unhurt.

His private life was polluted by vice and intemperance of every description. Cowardly as cruel, the report of a rebellion among those Germans of whose conquest he boasted, terrified him into preparing a refuge in his transmarine dominions, lest, like the Cimbri of old, they should force a passage into Italy. At a clap of thunder he would close his eyes and cover his head, and in a heavy storm the Latian Jupiter used to run under the bed, to hide himself from his Capitoline brother. He usually slept but three hours in the night, and that not calmly, but agitated by strange visions: the rest he passed sitting upon the bed, or traversing extensive colonnades, impatiently calling for the return of day. Justice began the work of retribution early, and he who troubled the rest of all others was unable to find quiet for himself. Among his other extraordinary qualities was a most insane jealousy of the slightest advantages enjoyed by others. He overthrew the statues of eminent men erected by Augustus in the field of Mars, and forbade them to be erected to any one in future except with his express permission. He even thought of not allowing Homer to be read: "Why not I, as well as Plato, who expelled that poet from his republic?" and talked of weeding all libraries of the writings and images of Virgil and Livy. This folly he carried even to envying the personal qualifications of his subjects, and being bald himself, he sent the barber abroad to shave every good head of hair that came in his way.

Little remains to complete the picture, but to say that his tastes were low, as his character was brutish. Passionately fond of theatrical entertainments and the sports of the amphitheatre and circus, it was from the profligate followers of these arts that he chose his favourites, to whom, and to whom alone, he was devotedly attached. The story of his meaning to appoint his horse consul is well known: the brute would have done more credit to the subordinate, than his master to the imperial

dignity ; but it is apocryphal. But besides a marble stable and an ivory manger, indulgences to which so dignified an animal might reasonably aspire, Caligula assigned to him a house and establishment, that he might entertain company more splendidly. We regret not to know whether the senators or their horses were the objects of this hospitality.

He was wont to say, that of all his qualities, he most valued his firmness of purpose (*ᾠδιατρεψία*). The judgment was in one sense correct : this was indeed the predominant feature of his character. But it was the firmness not of principle, not even of policy,¹ but of obstinate and entire selfishness, which regarded not the weightiest interests of others when placed in opposition to its caprices ; of habitual self-indulgence, which gratified the whim of the moment, alike careless of its folly or of its guilt. At first he would not, in the end he probably could not, control his passions ; and this inflexibility is the symptom of that mental disease which we believe to originate in uncontrolled power. This plea furnishes no particle of excuse for him, no more than drunkenness for the excesses of the drunkard : in both the loss of reason is a crime in itself, and in neither probably is it ever so complete as to obliterate the perception of right and wrong. Of genuine madness we find no trace in his life. He appears to have been subject to no delusions upon particular subjects, to no access either of frenzy or melancholy. As a boy he, as well as Cambyzes, was subject to epileptic fits, which were supposed to have impaired his mind ; and he entertained, it is said, doubts of his own sanity, and had thoughts of submitting to a course of medicine for his recovery. Others thought that a love potion, administered by his wife to fix affection, had produced madness ; but the tenor of his life countenances neither supposition. Folly, selfishness, cruelty, and the restlessness of a self-upbraiding spirit cannot be allowed shelter under the plea of insanity ; and the mental weakness and incapacity of self-control which arises from the habitual

dominion of passion, is no less widely different in its effects than in its origin from that which is dependent upon physical causes.

He perished by domestic conspiracy, in the fourth year of his reign and the twenty-ninth of his age. He oppressed the people and the nobility with impunity : he fell, when his jealous temper rendered him formidable to his servants and favourites.

Paul, emperor of Russia, was the son of Catherine II., who, as is well known, murdered her husband Peter III., and took possession of his throne, which she retained till death. She conceived a strong aversion for her son, who was in consequence brought up in retirement, neglected, and even exposed to want. When arrived at manhood he was still forbidden to reside at court ; his children were taken away to be educated under the empress's care ; he was studiously excluded from all knowledge or participation in affairs of state ; and even denied permission to gratify his military taste by active service. His mother's object was at once to render him unfit for empire, and to spread abroad the notion that he was so ; with the view of passing him entirely over in favour of his son Alexander, whom in her will she appointed to succeed to the throne. Paul seems to have been naturally affectionate, methodical, a lover of justice, temperate, even amidst the most consummate profligacy ever witnessed in a court ; but these good qualities were stifled by the faults of his education. Privation, contumely, and a constant sense of injury, soured his temper, and rendered him distrustful and cruel, at the same time that the enjoyment of a minor despotism made him capricious and ungovernable ; for he was the undisputed master of his little court, and could vent upon others the ill-humour inspired by his own crosses, unchecked by the presence of a superior, or the influence of public observation. He lived at the country palaces of Gatchina and Paulowsky, surrounded by his household officers and troops, and shunned by all others ; devoted to the minutiae of military discipline, and employed chiefly in reviewing his guards, for whom he devised a

new system of dress and regulations, which it was afterwards his great pride and pleasure to introduce into the army at large. There was a long terrace at Paulowsky, from which he could see all his sentinels, who were stuck about wherever there was room for a sentry-box. Here he used to promenade with an eye-glass, sending orders from time to time to one man to open a button more or less, to another to carry his musket higher or lower, and sometimes trotting a quarter of a league to administer a good caning with his own royal hand to one soldier, or to bestow a rouble on another, as he was pleased or displeased with his bearing.

One or two anecdotes of this part of his life will best illustrate his temper. Travelling through a forest, with marsh on each side of the road, he recollected some reason for going back, and ordered the driver to turn. He did not do so instantly, and Paul repeated the order. "In a moment," the man replied; "here the road is too narrow." Paul flew into a passion, jumped out of the carriage, and called to an equerry to stop the driver and chastise him. The equerry endeavoured to allay the storm by assurances that the carriage would turn as soon as possible. "You are a scoundrel as well as he," was the reply; "he shall turn even though he break my neck: at all hazards he shall do as I bid, the moment I give the order." Meanwhile the coachman had done so, but too late to save himself from a sound beating.

He ordered a horse that stumbled under him to be starved. On the eighth day word was brought him of the animal's death; to which he merely answered, "Good." The same accident happened after his accession in the streets of St. Petersburg, on which he got off, made his equeries hold a court-martial, and sentenced the offending beast to receive a hundred blows with a stick, which were immediately inflicted in presence of the Czar and the people. Worse anecdotes might be found. His passion for the strict observance of military minutiae has been mentioned. One day, as he exercised his regiment of cuirassiers, an officer's horse fell. Paul ran to the spot in a fury: "Get up, you rascal!" "I

cannot, Sire—my leg is broken.” Paul spit upon him, and walked away swearing.

Catherine, as before said, appointed Alexander her successor by will. She had intrusted this important document to Zoubow, her last favourite, who hastened immediately upon her death, in the year 1796, to place it in Paul’s hands. It is due to the late emperor to say, that he never took any part in the measures adopted for excluding his father, who succeeded to the vacant throne without opposition. The Czar’s conduct towards his family, on this occasion, does him honour: the more, that under similar circumstances, few of his predecessors would have hesitated to establish their power by the imprisonment or death even of an involuntary rival. Instead of using severity, he gave an affectionate reception to his sons, who had been separated from him since childhood, increased their revenues, and assured them and the empress, to whom he had been a harsh and capricious husband, of his love and protection; and at the same time, with prudence commendable on his son’s account no less than on his own, he provided employment for Alexander which kept the prince near his person till the critical time was over.

The court and city of St. Petersburg, the whole public of Russia, received with fear their new sovereign, whose caprice and extravagance were well known; but his first measures belied their expectation. He showed a decent respect to his mother’s memory, though he fully returned the hatred which she felt for him, retained her ministers, whom he had no reason to love, and displayed judgment and honesty in his first political measures, until every body thought that a false estimate had been formed of his character. This good sense and moderation did not last long. His first step was to secure his throne by incorporating with the royal guards his own household troops, on whose fidelity he depended. The latter, like the Prætorian bands of the Roman emperors, were a highly privileged and powerful body, captains of which held the rank of colonels of the line. Its officers of course were chiefly of high rank, and many of them, to the amount of some hundred, resigned their commis-

sions, angry at seeing men not of noble birth, perhaps raised from the ranks, placed over their heads, or unwilling to undergo the new and harassing discipline which Paul introduced. The Czar became alarmed at this general desertion, and, by way of conciliation, issued an order that all who had resigned, or should thereafter resign their commissions, should quit St. Petersburg within twenty-four hours. Many persons transported suddenly without the barriers, and forbidden to re-enter the city, and left on the high road, without shelter or clothing fitted to protect them from the cold, perished miserably for want of money to reach their homes.

Paul came to the throne ambitious of signaling himself as a reformer, but his mind was far too confined to perform so hard a task successfully. In the civil department, he did little but reverse all that his mother had done; in the military, his attention was confined to insignificant details. His great object was to conform the dress and exercise of the whole army to the model which he had been so long and anxiously forming at Gatschina. The very morning after his accession he commenced this important task by establishing what he called his Wacht-parade, to which every morning he devoted three or four hours. However severe the cold, he was still there, dressed in a plain green uniform, with thick boots and a large hat, for he placed his pride in bearing a Russian winter without furs; stamping about to warm himself, with his bald head bare and his snub-nose turned up to the wind, one hand behind his back, and the other beating time with his cane, and crying *Raz, dwa—Raz, dwa*, one, two—one two—surrounded by gouty old generals, who dared neither to absent themselves nor to dress warmer than their master. The old Russian uniform was handsome, suited to the climate, and could be put on in an instant: it consisted merely of a jacket and large trousers, which enabled the wearer to protect himself by any quantity of interior clothing, without injury to uniformity of appearance. The hair was worn long, and falling round the neck, so that it defended the ears from cold. Paul introduced the old-fashioned German

uniform, which every true Russian hated for its own sake, and despised as holding the Germans in supreme contempt; he encased their legs in long tight gaiters, made them powder and curl their hair, and hung false pigtails from their necks. Marshal Suvarof, on receiving orders to introduce these changes, together with the measure of the men's curls and pigtails (for everything under Paul was done by measure), observed that "hair-powder was not gunpowder, nor curls cannon, nor pig-tails bayonets;" and this witticism is said to have cost him his recall.

Not content with modelling the army after his own notions of elegance, his meddling spirit exerted itself in the most vexatious and tyrannical interferences with the freedom of private life. The dress, the colour of carriages and liveries, the method of harnessing horses, everything was matter of rule, and woe to him who met the Czar with anything about his equipage contrary to etiquette. One day he saw Count Razumoffski's sledge standing in the street without the driver, and ordered it to be immediately broken in pieces. It was of a blue colour, and the servants wore red liveries: upon which he issued a proclamation forbidding the use of blue sledges and red liveries in any part of the empire. He waged a crusade against round hats, which he thought a mark of jacobinism, the object of his greatest hate and fear. If any person appeared in one, it was taken from his head by the police; if he resisted, he was well beaten. The cocked hats in St. Petersburg were of course soon exhausted, and then round hats were metamorphosed into three-cornered hats, by pinning up the sides. The emperor himself is said to have stopped persons and pinned up their hats with his royal hands, to show his people how a loyal subject ought to be dressed. An order against wearing boots with coloured tops was no less rigorously enforced. The police officers stopped a gentleman driving through the streets in a pair. He remonstrated, and said he had no others with him, and certainly would not cut off the tops of those; upon which the officers, seizing each a leg as he sat in his droski, pulled them off, and left him to go

barefoot home. Coming down a street, the emperor saw a nobleman who had stopped to look at some workmen planting trees by his order. "What are you doing?" said he. "Merely seeing the men work," replied the nobleman. "Oh! is that your employment? Take off his pelisse and give him a spade. There—now work yourself!" Once, when he met an officer going to the palace wrapped in his cloak, a servant following with his sword, he gave the servant his master's commission, and reduced the officer to the ranks.

It was an ancient Russian usage that all who met the Czar, male or female, should quit their carriage, be it in mud or snow, to salute, and even to prostrate themselves before him. Peter the Great used to cudgel soundly any person who did so, and Catherine II. had abolished the practice; but Paul revived it, and exacted its observance most severely. Of course, amid a crowd of carriages continually passing at full speed, it was easy to neglect it, without intentional disrespect; but no such excuse was admitted. A lady, wife of a general in the army, hastening into St. Petersburg, from the country, to procure medical advice for her sick husband, passed the Czar inadvertently, and was immediately arrested and sent to prison. Alarm and anxiety threw her into a burning fever, which terminated in madness; and her husband died from the same causes, and for want of proper care and attendance. On being presented to Paul, it was necessary to drop plump on your knees, with force enough to make the floor ring as if a musket had been grounded, and to kiss his hand with energy sufficient to certify to all present the honour which you had just enjoyed. Prince George Galitzin was placed under arrest for kissing his hand *too negligently*. When enraged he lost all command of himself, which sometimes gave rise to very curious scenes. In one of his furious passions, flourishing his cane, he struck by accident the branch of a large lustre and broke it; whereupon he commenced a serious attack, from which he did not relax until he had entirely demolished his brittle antagonist.

Under a sovereign of such a temper no man could feel secure for an hour. The police kept strict watch over

the words, the actions, the correspondence of every one; and the knout, exile to Siberia, or at the best deportation without the frontiers, were unsparingly dealt out for involuntary or chimerical offences: and suspected persons were continually hurried out of the country without time being allowed for the arrangement of their affairs, and in ignorance at once of their offence and of the nature of the intended punishment. Such a state of things was not likely to last very long in Russia, with so many examples to prove how easy the descent is from the palace to the grave.

Towards the close of his reign his conduct became more and more intolerable, and at last he took care to advertise all Europe of his folly or madness, or both, by inserting in the St. Petersburg Gazette a notice to the following effect: "That the Emperor of Russia, finding that the powers of Europe cannot agree among themselves, and being desirous to put an end to a war which has desolated it for eleven years, intends to point out a spot to which he will invite all the other sovereigns to repair and fight in single combat, bringing with them as seconds and esquires their most enlightened ministers and able generals, such as Turgot, Pitt, Bernstorff, and that the Emperor himself proposes being attended by Generals Count Pahlen and Kutusoff." This piece of extravagance appears to have completed the disgust of the nobility, and consummated his ruin.

A plot was formed, at the head of which was Count Zoubow, the man to whom he had been indebted for the important service of suppressing Catherine's will. Paul's aversion to every thing which his mother had favoured soon overcame his gratitude, and Zoubow was ordered to quit the court, and reside upon his estates. Fresh intrigues again brought him into favour, and the first use he made of it was to plan the murder of his master. He opened his mind gradually to other noblemen: it was resolved, as private crime will often assume the guise of public virtue, that the safety of the empire required the deposition of Paul; and as there is but one prison whose doors can never open to a dethroned mo-

narch, they resolved, in conformity with all Russian precedent, to put him to death. The details of this catastrophe are interesting, and, it is presumed, authentic and accurate, since they were thus related to Mr. Carr by an eye-witness, and therefore an agent in the deed.

“The Emperor used to sleep in an outer apartment, next the Empress’s, upon a sofa, in his boots and regimentals; the other branches of the imperial family being lodged in different parts of the same building. On the 10th March, o.s. 1801, the day preceding the fatal night (whether Paul’s apprehension, or anonymous information suggested the idea, is not known), conceiving that a storm was ready to burst upon him, he sent to Count P——, the governor of the city, one of the noblemen who had resolved on his destruction. ‘I am informed, P——,’ said the Emperor, ‘that there is a conspiracy on foot against me: do you think it necessary to take any precaution?’ The Count, without betraying the least emotion, replied, ‘Sire, do not suffer such apprehensions to haunt your mind; if there were any combination forming against your Majesty’s person, I am sure I should be acquainted with it.’ ‘Then I am satisfied,’ said the Emperor, and the governor withdrew. Before Paul retired to rest, he unexpectedly expressed the most tender solicitude for the Empress and his children, kissed them with all the warmth of farewell fondness, and remained with them longer than usual; and after he had visited the sentinels at their different posts, he retired to his chamber, where he had not long remained, before, under some colourable pretext that satisfied the men, the guard was changed by the officers who had the command for the night, and were engaged in the confederacy. An hussar, whom the Emperor had particularly honoured by his notice and attention, always at night slept at his bed-room door, in the antechamber. It was impossible to remove this faithful soldier by any fair means. At this momentous period, silence reigned through the palace, except where it was disturbed by the pacing of the sentinels, or at a distance by the murmurs of the Neva; and only a

few lights were to be seen distantly and irregularly gleaming through the windows of this dark colossal abode. In the dead of the night, Z—— and his friends, amounting to eight or nine persons, passed the drawbridge, easily ascended a private staircase which led directly to the Emperor's chamber, and met with no resistance till they reached the anteroom, where the faithful hussar, awakened by the noise, challenged them, and presented his fusée. Much as they must have admired the brave fidelity of the guard, neither time nor circumstances would admit of an act of generosity which might have endangered the whole plan. Z—— drew his sabre and cut the poor fellow down. Paul, awakened by the noise, sprung from his sofa; at this moment the whole party rushed into the room: the unhappy sovereign, anticipating their design, at first endeavoured to entrench himself in the chairs and tables; then recovering, he assumed a high tone, told them they were his prisoners, and called on them to surrender. Finding that they fixed their eyes steadily and fiercely on him, and continued advancing towards him, he implored them to spare his life, declared his consent instantly to relinquish the sceptre, and to accept of any terms they would dictate. In his raving he offered to make them princes, and to give them estates, and titles, and orders, without end. They now began to press upon him, when he made a convulsive effort to reach the window; in the attempt he failed, and indeed so high was it from the ground, that, had he succeeded, the attempt would only have put an end to his misery. In the effort, he very severely cut his hand with the glass; and as they drew him back, he grasped a chair, with which he felled one of the assailants, and a desperate resistance took place. So great was the noise, that, notwithstanding the massy walls and double folding-doors which divided the apartment, the Empress was disturbed, and began to cry for help, when a voice whispered in her ear, and imperatively told her to remain quiet, otherwise she would be put to instant death. While the Emperor was thus making a last struggle, the Prince Y—— struck him on one of his temples with his

fist, and laid him upon the floor : Paul, recovering from the blow, again implored his life ; at this moment the heart of Z—— relented, and on being observed to tremble and hesitate, a young Hanoverian resolutely exclaimed, ‘ We have passed the Rubicon : if we spare his life, before the setting of to-morrow’s sun we shall be his victims.’ Upon which he took off his sash, turned it twice round the naked neck of the Emperor, and giving one end to Z—— and holding the other himself, they pulled for a considerable time with all their force, until their miserable sovereign was no more : they then retired from the palace without the least molestation, and returned to their respective homes.”*

After the accession of the new emperor, Zoubow was ordered not to approach the court, and Count P—— was transferred from the government of St. Petersburg to that of Riga. No other notice was taken of the actors in this tragedy. Whether this extraordinary lenity is to be ascribed to fear, or to a sense of the necessity of removing Paul from the throne (for the high personal character of Alexander places him above the suspicion of having been an accomplice), the late emperor would better have consulted justice, the interests of his throne, and his own reputation, if he had exacted a severer retribution for the murder of a father and a sovereign.†

* Carr’s Northern Summer.

† This sketch of Paul’s life is chiefly taken from Masson, *Mémoires Secrets sur la Russie*. Several of the anecdotes rest on Dr. Clarke’s authority.



CHAPTER V.



Early changes in the Athenian constitution—Murder of Cylon — Fatalism — Usurpation of Pisistratus — His policy — Hippias and Hipparchus—Conspiracy of Harmodius and Aristogiton—Expulsion of Hippias—Cosmo de' Medici, Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici — Conspiracy of the Pazzi.

FOR nearly four centuries subsequent to the age of Theseus, scarce any mention of Athens occurs in Grecian history: a circumstance honourable to that city, as denoting a long course of tranquil prosperity, and indicative of candour and veracity in the writers, who were content to relate the few incidents preserved by tradi-

tion, without taxing their imaginations to cast a fabulous splendour over an unknown period. The change of dynasty in the person of Melanthus, and the more celebrated devotion of his son Codrus,* with the alterations in the constitution subsequent to, and partly consequent upon, the death of the latter, constitute the only remarkable events during this long lapse of years; and when at length her authentic history commences, it is in consequence of the interruption of that happiness which we are led to believe she so long enjoyed. Upon the death of Codrus it was resolved that no living person could be worthy to bear the title which he had borne, and his son Medon was appointed chief magistrate, with the title of Archon, or ruler. Twelve Archons followed in hereditary succession, when a further change took place, the office being made elective, and limited to the period of ten years; and at the end of the seventh decennial Archonship the duties of the office were divided between nine persons annually elected. After this change, the possession of political supremacy became an object of strife to the Eupatridæ, or nobles, in whom all power was vested: and the Alcæonidæ, or descendants of Alcæon, the last hereditary Archon, secured the prize. Cylon, a man eminent for rank and influence, bore their superiority impatiently, and endeavoured by force of arms to make himself master of the government. He seized the citadel; but the people rose against him, and being unprovided for a siege he sought safety in flight, abandoning his followers to the rage of the adverse faction. As their best hope, they took refuge at the altars, where violence could not be offered to them without incurring the guilt of sacrilege. Megacles, the head of the Alcæonidæ, was then Archon; and by his partisans, some of the suppliants, induced to quit their refuge upon condition of personal safety, were perfidiously executed; others were put to death even at the dreaded altars of the Eumenides.† Thus far there is nothing in this

* Hist. of Greece, p. 18.

† The Furies. These goddesses were worshipped with

occurrence to distinguish it from a hundred other instances of perfidy and cruelty: it is to the remote consequences that we wish to direct the reader's attention. The Athenians, without caring for the murder, were deeply shocked at the sacrilege; insomuch that not long after, when parties had changed place, it was decreed that of those who had been concerned in it, all yet alive should be condemned to banishment, and the bones of the deceased be taken up and cast out of Attica. The exiles afterwards returned; but a prejudice long existed against their posterity, which proved no ineffectual weapon in political warfare, and twice furnished Sparta with the means of embarrassing her enemy by requiring the expulsion of some of the leading citizens of the state. The demand was aptly met by recalling to mind two similar transactions in which the principal families of Sparta had been engaged, and bidding them set the example of expiation.* It appears, however, from Aristophanes (unless the passage is merely a squib against the Lacedæmonians) that the charge of being "one of the polluted" had not, even after the lapse of one hundred and sixty years, or more, lost all its influence.†

mysterious veneration by the Athenians, who held it an ill omen to call them by their proper name, and spoke of them as the venerable goddesses (σεμναὶ θεαὶ), or the Eumenides, because they had been propitious (εὐμενέϊς) to Orestes after his acquittal by the court of Areopagus. This was owing partly to a general dislike of alluding to gloomy subjects, which led them, among other things, to avoid speaking openly of death or the dead (hence the phrases οἱ καμόντες, οἱ κατοιχόμενοι, those who are worn out, the departed, &c.); partly to wishing to propitiate an object of dread by fair words, as the Highlanders called fairies "men of peace," especially on a Friday, when their power was greatest, and the Lowlanders entitled them "good neighbours," and the devil himself the "goodman," keeping reverentially out of sight his territorial designation.

* See Greece, p. 55.

† Ἐκ τῶν ἀλιτηρίων σέφη-
μιγ ἐγινέναι τῶν τῇν θεοῦ.

Ιππ. 445.

We have already mentioned that it was the insult offered to the gods, rather than the crime against man, which produced so deep a sensation. That the perpetrators of a cruel and treacherous action should be regarded with abhorrence, will not indeed surprise us: but the lasting ban entailed upon their posterity is connected with some remarkable tenets, and deserves a few words in explanation. The Greeks were firm believers in the doctrines of fatalism. Man, it was held, struggled in vain to escape from the vortex of destiny; however repugnant to his wishes, or abhorrent to his principles, he was borne on to do or suffer that which was decreed, by an irresistible force, against which even the immortal gods contended in vain. A very curious passage to this effect occurs in Herodotus. Cræsus, after his defeat and captivity, sent messengers to reproach the Delphian oracle with misleading to ruin, by its false predictions, one who had merited the favour of the god by the magnificence of his offerings. The answer ran thus:—"It is impossible even for a god to escape from fate. Cræsus but expiates the sin of his fifth ancestor,* who, being in the guard of the descendants of Hercules, in subservience to a woman's treachery, slew his master, and seized upon a kingdom which belonged not to him. Fain would Apollo have deferred the fall of Sardis until the time of the sons of Cræsus; but he could not turn aside the Fates."† Here, coupled with the assertion of an immutable destiny, we find the not unnatural deduction that the crime of an ancestor entailed misfortune on his posterity: but this doctrine was extended much farther, and it was taught that deeds of extraordinary blackness introduced a malignant demon into the family of the offender, which empoisoned its prosperity, and hurried generations yet unborn to inevitable guilt and ruin. The office of inflicting this retribution was assigned with some degree of

* Gyges. Candaules, whom he murdered, was one of the Heraclidæ, or descendants of Hercules. The story is told in Herodotus, i. 8.

† Herod. i. 91.

confusion and uncertainty to the Fates, "who follow up the transgressions of gods and men,"* to the Erinnyes, or Furies, or to Nemesis, the personification of divine displeasure. But when once these fearful visitants were established in a house, that house was marked out for misery and ruin. Such was the fate of the descendants of Pelops and Labdacus, the royal families of Argos and of Thebes, whose misfortunes have furnished a never-failing theme to the Greek tragedians, who abound in references † to the fatal curse upon these races.‡ It is from the presence of these dread ministers of wrath, visible to her inspired eyes, that Cassandra draws her fearful presages of evil in that scene, perhaps the grandest in Grecian tragedy.

"For never shall that bard, whose yelling notes
In dismal accord pierce the affrighted ear,
Forsake this house. The genius of the feast,
Drunk with the blood of man, and fired from thence
To bolder daring, ranges through the rooms
Linked with his kindred furies: these possess
The mansion, and in horrid measures chaunt

* Hesiod., *Theog.*, 220.

† *Æsch.*, *Sept. c. Theb.*, 832, 951. *Eurip.*, *Phœnissæ*, 1518.

‡ Some modern historical instances of a similar superstitious feeling are given lower down in the text. Its nature, however, cannot be better illustrated than by reference to the legend attaching to the family of Redgauntlet in the novel of that name. The downfall of the house of Ravenswood, in the admirable tale of the *Bride of Lammermoor*, though foretold and fated, is not sufficiently identified with the story of the Mermaid's Well, to be quoted on this occasion. If it were so, that work, from the severe grandeur of its serious parts, and the singularly impressive way in which all events, and all agency, human and supernatural, combine from the outset to bring about a catastrophe, foreseen and prophesied, but not the less inevitable, would offer to the English reader an excellent example of the spirit of the superstitions and tragedies here alluded to, though widely differing from them in form.

The first base deed; recording with abhorrence
The adulterous lust which stained a brother's bed."*

So, after the catastrophe, the chorus refers to the same cause the accumulated horrors and crimes which weigh down the house of Atreus.

“ O thou demon, who dost fall
On the high Tantalid hall,
Well I know thee, mighty fiend,
Who here dost ever wend,
Haunting down the double line
From father unto son !

“ *Clytem.* Aye, now thy words have sense and grace,
Calling on that thrice great fiend,
The demon of this race,
For 'tis from him their bowels burn
With rage of lapping blood ;
Ere the old grief has ceased to throb,
Young gore comes on amain.”†

With such ideas concerning an avenging destiny, it is no wonder that the Greeks shunned contact with the inheritors of divine anger ; and national prejudice might be more strongly raised by the sacrilege of the Alcæonidæ, because many of the sufferers were slain at the very altars of the Eumenides, to whom the punishment of such deeds peculiarly belonged, and whose worship had been introduced into Attica in amends for the judicial sentence which delivered Orestes from their power. In modern times an analogous persuasion concerning the fortunes of particular families has prevailed ; in illustration of which we may cite the belief in the ill-luck of the Stuarts, a belief almost justified by the series of calamities and bloody deaths which beset the princes of that house : and, indeed, this faith in the influence of misconduct to produce hereditary misfortune has been

* Potter's *Æschylus* : *Agam.*, 1157 ; ed. Blomf. We give the translation as we find it, and are not answerable for the rendering of *Κῆμος* *ξυγγόνων* 'Επινύων.

† Symmons' *Agamemnon* ; 1444, ed. Blomf.

general in Ireland and the Scottish Highlands, and probably in other countries where a vivid imagination is found in union with no high degree of cultivation and knowledge. In Ireland it is the popular creed, that an estate gained by fraud brings a curse along with it* (to

* A similar belief existed in England with respect to the alienations of church property at the Reformation, of which the following is a remarkable instance.

Sir Walter Raleigh was gifted by Queen Elizabeth with the lands of Sherborne in Dorsetshire, which had been bequeathed by Osmund, a Norman knight, to the see of Canterbury, with a heavy denunciation against any rash or profane person who should attempt to wrest them from the church. This anathema was, in the opinion of the vulgar, first accomplished in the person of the Protector Somerset, to whom, after sundry vicissitudes, the property belonged. This nobleman was hunting in the woods of Sherborne when his presence was required by Edward the Sixth, and he was shortly afterwards committed to the Tower, and subsequently beheaded. The forfeited estate then lapsed to the See of Salisbury until the reign of Elizabeth, to whom it was made over by the bishop, at the instigation of Raleigh, who was blamed, and apparently with justice, for having displayed on this occasion a grasping and even dishonourable spirit. So strong were the religious prejudices of the day, that even the discerning Sir John Harrington attributed to a judgment from heaven a trifling accident which occurred to Raleigh while surveying the demesne which he coveted. Casting his eyes upon it, according to the notion of that writer, as Ahab did upon Naboth's vineyard, and, in the course of a journey from Plymouth to the coast, discussing at the same time the advantages of the desired possession, Sir Walter's horse fell, and the face of the rider, then, as the relater observes, "thought to be a very good one," was buried in the ground. After Raleigh's fall the estate was seized by James the First, who wished to bestow it on his favourite, Car, Earl of Somerset; but Prince Henry interfered, and obtained possession, intending to restore it to the owner. The prince's death, however, frustrated his intentions, and left Sherborne still in the favourite's hands. The premature death of this promising youth was thought by the vulgar again to corroborate the old prophecy. To Carew, the youngest son, and the

open force they seem to be more indulgent); that the possessor becomes a doomed man, and neither he nor his descendants prosper. In Scotland it was thought that a pious parent entailed a blessing upon his offspring, while the punishment of the wicked and oppressor, if not immediately manifested upon himself, or his children, yet surely descended even on succeeding generations. This feeling extended to all classes; and a striking instance of it is connected with the massacre of Glencoe, the blackest incident in Scottish history. Colonel Campbell, of Glenlyon, grandson of Glenlyon, who commanded the military upon that fatal day, being with his regiment at Havannah, was ordered to superintend the execution of a soldier condemned to be shot. A reprieve was sent, but with directions that no person was to be told of it until the prisoner was on his knees prepared to receive the volley, not even the firing party, who were informed that the signal would be the waving of a white handkerchief by the commanding officer. "When all was prepared, and the prisoner in momentary expectation of his fate, Colonel Campbell put his hand into his pocket for the reprieve, and in pulling out the packet, the white handkerchief accompanied it, and catching the eyes of the party, they fired, and the unfortunate prisoner was shot dead. The paper dropped through Colonel Campbell's fingers, and clapping his hand to his forehead, he exclaimed, "The curse of God and of Glencoe is here! I am an unfortunate, ruined man." He soon after retired from the service, not from any reflection or reprimand on account of this melancholy affair, for it was known to be entirely accidental. The

injured survivor of Sir Walter, the subsequent attainder of Car, and the forfeiture of his estates upon his committal to the Tower, appeared to confirm the ill fortune attendant upon the owners of Sherborne; and the misfortunes which afterwards befell the house of Stuart were also considered by him to corroborate the old presage. On the confiscation of Car's estates, Digby, Earl of Bristol, obtained Sherborne from the king, and in his family it now remains.—*Life of Sir W. Raleigh, by Mrs. Thomson, chap. vi.*

impression upon his mind, however, was never effaced. Nor is the massacre, and the judgment which the people believe has fallen on the descendants of the principal actors in this tragedy, effaced from their recollection. They carefully note, that while the family of the unfortunate gentleman who suffered is still entire, and his estate preserved in direct male succession to his posterity, this is not the case with the family, posterity, and estate of those who were the principals, promoters, and actors in this black affair.”*

In addition to the strife of faction consequent upon Cylon's attempt, Athens was convulsed by discord between the rich and poor, arising from the oppressive rights possessed by creditors over the persons of their debtors, and the difficulty experienced by indigent freemen in supporting themselves by their own exertions, in consequence of the general prevalence of slave labour. Solon was appointed archon, with power to remodel the constitution; and having done so, he quitted Athens, and remained abroad, it is said, for ten years, the people having engaged not to alter his institutions within that time. But to put an end to faction was beyond his power. The landholders of Attica were divided into three parties, denominated from the lowlands, the highlands, and the coast. The first consisted chiefly of the nobility, the great proprietors; the second were a poorer class, among whom the democratical interest predominated; and the third, consisting in a great degree of men engaged in trade, held an intermediate station, both in circumstances and politics. Lycurgus headed the first party; Megacles was chief of the third; and during the absence of Solon, Pisistratus, with whom we are more immediately concerned, advanced to eminence, and assumed the direction of the second. Of his early life few particulars have reached us; it is only said that he was distinguished by eloquence and military talents, which he displayed on different occasions in the wars against Megara. Not long after Solon's return,

* Stewart, Sketches of Highlanders, part i. sect. xii.

Pisistratus came in his chariot into the market-place, complaining that, in consequence of the jealousy excited by his support of the democratical interest, his life had been attempted while he was on his road into the country, in confirmation of which he exhibited wounds upon his own person and upon his mules. Whether the story were true or false, has been controverted, and must remain a matter of opinion; but that it was a fiction, seems to have been generally thought by the ancient writers. At all events, the people believed the tale, and a body of guards was decreed him, the numbers of which were gradually augmented, until he was enabled to gain possession of the Acropolis, or citadel, and, in the language of Greece, became tyrant* of Athens.

Death and confiscation being the usual concomitants of a Grecian revolution, it was a matter of course that the leaders of the defeated party should consult their safety by flight; and accordingly, Megacles, with the other chiefs of the Alcmæonidæ, withdrew from Athens. The terms on which he was invited to return, which happened soon after, are curious and characteristic. He was distinguished by victories gained in the public games of Greece, and during his exile he had conquered in the chariot-race at the Olympic festival. The condition of his restoration was, that the glory of this success should be ascribed to Pisistratus.† It may be doubted, though horse-racing in modern days, and chivalrous exercises in the middle ages, have been cultivated with ardour by men distinguished by birth and station, whether the possession of the best horses in the world has at any

* The proper meaning of this word will form the subject of a future article; meanwhile it is sufficient to observe, that it will never be employed here to denote specifically a blood-thirsty and oppressive ruler, but merely one who has raised himself to a degree of power unauthorised by the constitution of his country.

† Schol. in Nub. Meurs. Pisistratus. This story is told of Cimon, the father of Miltiades, instead of Megacles, by Herodotus, vi. 103.

time since availed to procure the forgiveness of a political enemy. But the high estimation of such honours forms a striking feature in the Grecian character. We know from Homer, that, long previous to the institution of public games, princes contended with each other in athletic exercises: and when stated times were set aside, at which the flower of all Greece might vie in displaying strength and activity under the sanction and with all the pomp of religion, and the victor was rewarded by the acclamations of his assembled countrymen, it is no wonder that a nation highly imaginative and susceptible of the love of fame should have been led to set an extravagant price upon the superiority in qualities whose value was in truth great in times when the arm of one man was sufficient to decide a battle, but diminished proportionably to the progress of art and science. The chariot-race almost always formed a part of these games; and naturally, for when warriors fought from chariots, the possession of the best horses was a valuable distinction. This method of warfare had been disused long before the time of Pisistratus; but the chariot-race still formed a part, perhaps the most important one, in the Grecian games. And the welcome of a conquering general to his native city was less distinguished than that of an Olympic victor, whose prowess reflected honour upon the state which gave him birth: and thus such triumphs, by gratifying popular vanity, might become important, even to the interests of a statesman.

The year 560 B.C. is fixed as that of Pisistratus's usurpation. The union of Megacles and Lycurgus produced his expulsion, after he had possessed the tyranny, it is thought, for about six years; of the transactions during which we have no information. He remained in banishment for an equal time, when the enmity between the united factions broke out afresh, and Megacles, to establish his superiority, brought back Pisistratus, connecting their interests by giving him his daughter in marriage. To gain the consent of the Athenians to his return, they devised a plan, characterised by Herodotus, from whom we have the story, as a most simple device to ensnare a

people distinguished for intellect and very far removed from a simple good-nature. In one of the boroughs of Attica there lived a woman named Phya, of extraordinary stature, and withal of handsome person, whom they selected to personate the patron Goddess of Athens; and having carefully instructed her how to act her part, they dressed her in appropriate armour, placed her in a chariot, and sent her into the city, preceded by heralds, making proclamation, "O Athenians, receive with favour Pisistratus, whom Athene,* honouring him above all men, herself brings back unto her own Acropolis." The news flew abroad throughout Attica,† that Athene had brought back Pisistratus, and those who were in the city, believing that it was the Goddess, paid divine honours to a mortal, and received the exile.†

His prosperity, however, was of very short duration : a domestic quarrel is said to have produced his expulsion a second time, about a year after his return, and he remained in banishment for a period of ten years, at the end of which his son Hippias, who had now attained manhood, induced him to attempt the recovery of his power. Thebes, Argos, and other cities assisted him with loans, by means of which he collected an army; and sailing from Eretria, where he had fixed his abode, he disembarked at Marathon, was joined by many of his countrymen, and defeating the ruling party, for the third time became master of Athens. Both now and formerly his success was characterised by moderation and lenity; for his only measure of precaution against future conspiracies was to take as hostages the children of such of his chief opponents as chose to remain in Athens, who were committed to the charge of Lygdamis, the friendly ruler of Naxos.

That Pisistratus's temper and character were mild and amiable, is proved by the bloodless nature of the revolutions which he effected; and confirmed even by the testimony of those authors who have endeavoured to raise

* Or Pallas, the Latin Minerva.

† Herod. i. 60.

the reputation of Solon at his expense, by narrating many not very probable stories of the sage's pertinacious opposition to his schemes of advancement. That Solon saw and lamented the ambition of Pisistratus is probable, but we learn upon the same authority that they lived on terms of intimacy and esteem from the return of the former until his death; and Plutarch, whose object was to exalt the patriot philosopher, has yet, in doing so, drawn a most favourable picture of the tyrant. "He was courteous, and marvellously faire spoken, and showed himself beside very good and pitifull to the poore, and temperate also to his enemies: further, if any good quality were lacking in him, he did so finely counterfeit it, that men imagined it was more in him, than in those that naturally had it in them indeed. As, to be a quiet man, no meddler, contented with his owne, aspiring no higher, and hating those which would attempt to change the present state of the Common Wealth, and would practise any innovation. By this art, and fine manner of his, he deceived the poore common people. Howbeit Solon found him out straight, and saw the mark he shot at: but yet hated him not at that time, and sought still to win him, and bring him to reason, saying oft times, both to himselfe and to others, that whoso could pluck out of his head the worne of ambition, by which he aspired to be the chiefest, and could heale him of his greedy desire to rule, there could not be a man of more virtue, nor a better citizen than he would prove."* He adds a strong testimony to the beneficent administration of Pisistratus, in saying that Solon afterwards became one of his council; and while Herodotus has distinctly asserted that he ruled Athens honourably and well, neither changing the magistracies nor altering the laws, we learn from other authorities that he adhered to the regulations of Solon. And it is to his credit that he obeyed a citation to appear before the court of Areopagus, on a charge of murder, even if we grant that he ran little risk of being condemned; for it shows pru-

* Plut. vit. Solon.

dence, and good sense, and good feeling, that he chose rather to wear the appearance of submission to authority, than to outrage popular opinion by the visible assumption of irresponsible power. Of his lenity towards those who personally offended or injured him, several stories are told. A young man who was attached to his daughter, with the help of his friends carried her off forcibly from a sacrifice upon the sea-shore, at which she was assisting. Their galley was intercepted by Hippias, who was then cruising in search of pirates, and they were led captives to Athens. Being brought before the injured father, they scorned to use the language of entreaty, boldly declaring that they had held death cheap from the time of undertaking the enterprise. Pisistratus, struck with the high spirit of the youth, gave his daughter in marriage to the principal, and thus converted dangerous enemies into valuable and attached friends.* The above extract from Plutarch bears witness to his charity, which yet was not indiscriminate, nor abused to the encouragement of idleness; against which he not only enacted laws, but would inquire of any one whom he saw unemployed in the market-place, whether it were owing to the want of agricultural implements, and if it were so, he would supply the deficiency.

In this, however, perhaps policy was as much concerned as charity. Having obtained his power through the support of the democratical party, it was now his object to consolidate and establish it upon the downfall of that interest, by removing the multitude as far as possible from the city, and compelling them to follow agricultural labour. Another reason might be the improvement of the revenue, towards which he exacted the tithes of all agricultural produce. A humorous story is told of an old man, who was found by him cultivating a stubborn and rocky piece of ground. "What harvest can you derive from thence?" he said. "Aches and blisters, and the tithe of them goes to Pisistratus." The answer was well received, and procured for him an

* Meursius, Pisistratus.

immunity from the tax. On this subject, however, Pisistratus's conduct was generally unjust and oppressive, for he not only forced the poorer Athenians to a rural life, but excluded them from the city, and made them wear a particular dress, that this exclusion might be the better enforced. At the same time he proved himself not indifferent to their interest, by appointing a public provision for those who were wounded in the public service.

It were much to be wished that our information concerning the policy of Pisistratus and the public affairs of Athens during his administration were more minute; but the total silence of history concerning this period indicates at least that it was one of tranquillity and happiness. We have seen already that his private character was amiable; it remains to be added that his tastes were elegant and his mind cultivated. By many he is included in the list of worthies distinguished as the seven sages of Greece; indeed all writers who mention him bear testimony to the successful cultivation of his mental powers; and he possesses a strong claim to the gratitude of the world at large, if it be true that he collected and rendered into order the scattered fragments of Homer's poems before they were irretrievably corrupted and confused by the inaccuracies of oral tradition.† And he scarcely deserves less credit* for having been the first to establish a public library: an institution

* Meurs. Pisistratus.

† He is accused, however, of having interpolated several lines to gratify Athenian vanity, and one with a deeper view; that, namely, which says of Ajax, that he ranged his own alongside of the Athenian ships (Il. ii. 558) with the purpose of strengthening Athens' claim to Salamis, then hotly contested by Megara. The Megarian versions said, on the other hand, that Ajax led ships from Salamis, and from Polichne, Nisæa, and other towns of Megaris. Both this trick, and the credit of collecting Homer's poems, are ascribed by other authors to Solon. Some eminent modern scholars have doubted whether this arrangement and revision ever took place.—See Knight, *Proleg. ad Hom.* § 4, 5.

most valuable in all ages and places, but especially before the introduction of printing, when the price of books rendered it impossible for any but the wealthy to possess them. He also devoted much of his attention and revenue to the embellishment of the city; he built fountains, and a gymnasium, or place of exercise; he threw his private gardens open to the public; he dedicated a temple to the Pythian Apollo, and had commenced another to Olympian Zeus, the Latin Jupiter, when his labours were interrupted by death, B.C. 527, after he had enjoyed for ten years in tranquillity the sovereignty which he had pursued for so many anxious years. He left a name adorned by many virtues and accomplishments, and blemished apparently only by one great fault, ambition: but this, the master-passion of his life, has sullied his numerous great and good qualities, as a tainted fountain pollutes the whole stream. Had he been a rightful sovereign, he might have been hailed as the father of his country: instead of which his fellow-citizens saw in him only the parent of a hated and proscribed race, and later ages "damn him with the faint praise" of being the best of tyrants.

His sons Hipparchus and Hippias* appear to have succeeded quietly to his authority; which they shared in common, Hipparchus filling the more prominent station. Their father's virtues descended to them, and Athens for some time flourished under their guidance. The strong expression of Plato is, that the Athenians lived as in old times under the reign of Saturn. He goes on to say that Hipparchus made the collection of Homer's poems which others have ascribed to Pisistratus, and caused them to be publicly read in the order of their arrange-

* Much doubt has arisen which of these was the elder. Thucydides says, contrary to the general opinion, that it was Hippias, and he seems to be corroborated by Herodotus; but it is a question of no importance, and not worth discussion. Pisistratus left a third legitimate son, named Thessalus, of whom scarce any mention is made in history, and a natural son, Hegesistratus, established by his father as tyrant of Sigeum, on the Hellespont.

ment at the Panathenaic festival ; and further displayed his taste in the patronage of Anacreon and Simonides, whom he induced by his liberality to take up their abode in Athens. And having thus provided for the mental cultivation of the citizens, he turned his attention to the improvement of the rustic population, and with this view caused Hermæ* to be erected in the main streets of the city and boroughs, upon which he inscribed in verse the most pithy maxims which he had heard or invented, that so the countrymen, wandering about, might taste of his wisdom, and come from the fields and woods to be further instructed in it. Two of these sentences are preserved—"The memorial of Hipparchus. Do not deceive a friend." "The memorial of Hipparchus. Depart, meditating justice." Further, we have the testimony of Thucydides, that he oppressed not the many, but bore himself ever inoffensively, and that "these tyrants held virtue and wisdom in great account for a long time, and taking of the Athenians but a twentieth part of their revenues, (they diminished, therefore, Pisistratus's impost by one half,) adorned the city, managed their wars, and performed the rights of their religion. In other points they were governed by the laws formerly established, save that they took care ever to prefer to the magistracy men of their own adherence." Thus fourteen years they ruled in peace and honour, when at length a single act of oppression and insult, a moment's violation of the maxims of temperance and virtue, which their conduct as well as their precepts enforced, produced a revolution upon which probably the destinies of all Greece have hinged.

Hipparchus had conceived a personal ill-will towards an Athenian citizen named Harmodius, which he vented by insulting publicly the offender's sister. Another citizen, Aristogiton, had reasons of his own for wishing ill to Hipparchus: he stimulated his friend Harmodius to a keener sense of the injury, and they resolved to

* Statues of Hermes, the Latin Mercury, consisting of a square pillar surmounted by a head of the god.

wash away their wrongs in blood. But few associates were admitted to the knowledge of their plot, which was to be executed at the Panathenaic festival, when it was usual for all persons to appear in arms. Hipparchus alone was personally offensive; but to dissolve the tyranny, and to secure themselves from retribution, Hippias was to be involved in his brother's fate. On the morning of the festival, while Hippias, attended by his guards, was in the Ceramicus,* ordering the procession, Harmodius and Aristogiton saw one of the conspirators conversing with him familiarly, "for Hippias was accessible to all." Thinking themselves betrayed, they resolved, at least, to take vengeance on the more obnoxious party, and hastened to seek Hipparchus, whom they slew. Harmodius was slain in the tumult which ensued. Aristogiton escaped for a time, but was soon after taken and put to death.

The news being brought instantly to Hippias before others had heard it, he dissembled his emotion, and bade the citizens repair to a certain spot without their arms, as if he wished to address them previous to the procession. He then summoned his guard, and selected from the assembled multitude all whom he suspected, or found armed with daggers, a weapon not generally worn by those celebrating the festival. Thus for the present he preserved his power; but his temper was changed by the danger which he had escaped, and his government became jealous and intolerable. Many were slain, and many fled to join the exiled Alcæonidæ, whose cause became daily more popular at Athens, and throughout the rest of Greece, until at length they gained strength sufficient to enable them, with the assistance of Lacedæmon, to lay siege to Hippias in Athens, in the fourth year after the death of Hipparchus. The city, however, was strong and well provisioned; and he might have baffled their patience, but for a fortunate chance which threw his children, with those of his lead-

* A space in the city, surrounded by public buildings, in which the people usually held their meetings.

ing partisans, into the hands of the assailants. Parental anxiety prevailed, and the town surrendered, on condition that the obnoxious should receive no injury, but should quit Attica within five days. Hippias retired to Sigeum. When advanced in years, he accompanied the armament of Darius in hope of recovering his sovereignty; it was he that counselled its descent upon the plain of Marathon, where once before he had landed under a better star, and he is reported by Cicero to have been slain in the memorable battle which ensued.*

After the expulsion of Hippias, the memory of Harmodius and Aristogiton was hallowed by the Athenians in every way which the imagination of a grateful people could devise. Brazen statues were erected in honour of them (by the side of which, in after-times, those of Brutus and Cassius were placed), their descendants were gifted in perpetuity with the privilege of eating in the Prytaneum† at the public cost, with select places at the public spectacles, and with immunity from taxes: their names, forbidden to be borne by slaves, were ordered to be celebrated at all future Panathenaic festivals: and if the orators of Athens wished to find a theme agreeable to national vanity, it was to the praises of the tyrant-killers, or the events of the Persian war, that they resorted. Yet, after all these tributes of admiration, it is asserted by Æschines, that “a temperate and governed feeling so modified the character of those benefactors of the state, men supereminent in all virtues, that those who have panegyrised their deeds do yet appear therein to have fallen short of the things performed by them.” This extravagant, or probably pretended, enthusiasm may be endured, though not commended, as a privilege

* Ad. Att. lib. ix. 10.

† In modern language this would be the town-hall. There was a table kept here for the Prytanes (the officers presiding in the senate for the time being), and to have the right of eating here (*σίτησις ἐν Πρυτανείῳ*) was one of the greatest honours that his country could bestow on an Athenian.

assumed by advocates and public speakers in all ages: but we cannot extend the same toleration to Simonides, who had benefited by the friendship and liberality of the deceased, when he asserts "that a light broke upon Athens when Harmodius and Aristogiton slew Hipparchus." Their exploit was a favourite subject of the odes* with which the musical Athenians enlivened their entertainments, one of which, composed by Callistratus, has been preserved, and is esteemed among the noblest specimens of the lyric muse of Greece.

I'll wreath my sword in myrtle bough,
The sword that laid the tyrant low,
When patriots, burning to be free,
To Athens gave equality.

Harmodius, hail! though reft of breath,
Thou ne'er shalt feel the stroke of death;
The heroes' happy isles† shall be
The bright abode allotted thee.

* Allusions to the affection with which these patriots were regarded, both generally and with reference to this custom, are frequent in Aristophanes.—See *Ἰππ.* 786, *Ἀχαρν.* 980, *Σφ.* 1225.

† Not the Hesperides, but an island called Achilleia, or Leuce, at the mouth of the Danube, consecrated to Achilles, where his tomb was visible. The hero, however, must have been there in proper person, since he espoused either Helen or Iphigenia, and had a son by her. Here he dwelt in perpetual youth, with Diomed, the Ajaxes, and other heroes. Many mythological tales are related concerning the island. Birds swept and sprinkled the temple of Achilles with water from their wings: passing vessels often heard the sound of sweet yet awe-inspiring music; others distinguished the din of arms and horses and the shouts of battle. If vessels anchored for the night off the island, Achilles and Helen would come on board, drink with the sailors, and sing them the verses of Homer, with particulars of their personal adventures, even of the most delicate description. Once a man who ventured to sleep upon the island was awoken by Achilles, and taken home to sup with him, when the hero played the lyre, and Patroclus served wine: Thetis and

I 'll wreathe the sword in myrtle bough,
 The sword that laid Hipparchus low,
 When at Minerva's adverse fane
 He knelt, and never rose again.

While Freedom's name is understood,
 You shall delight the wise and good;
 You dared to set your country free,
 And gave her laws equality.*

Nevertheless there seems not to be the smallest ground for supposing that the actors in this tragedy were guided by patriotic motives. The authors who speak of it vary somewhat in the circumstances which they relate, but all agree that it was a private quarrel, a personal offence, which inspired their resolution and their hatred. Many have been the instances in which the wantonness of power exercised on an individual has proved fatal to men who have trampled unopposed upon the liberties of their country, as if it were beneficially ordained that the vices of individuals should work out the general good.

But though this conspiracy can in no respect be regarded as the proximate cause of the re-establishment of democracy; though neither its motives nor its effects, so far as we can judge after the long lapse of ages, merit the encomiums which have been showered on them so profusely, it nevertheless affected vitally the interests of Athens, and, through her, of the civilised world. The mind need indeed be far-sighted and acute which presumes to trace the changes which a single deviation from the ordained course of events would have produced; yet it is neither uninteresting nor un instructive to consider in what way a nation's destiny might have been modified, and to observe the natural connexion by which crime results from intemperance and injustice, misfortune and misconduct from crime; while the melancholy series is still overruled to restore freedom to an injured

other gods were there. Many other stories, equally amusing and no less worthy of credit, are related concerning this wonderful place.—*Bayle, art. Achilleia.*

† Bland, Anthology

people, and to punish the ambition which produced such fatal effects. From the apparently uninterrupted content which prevailed at Athens during a period of twenty-four years, from the last return of Pisistratus to the death of Hipparchus, there is good reason to believe that, but for private enmity, the brothers might have borne uninterrupted sway for the natural period of their lives. That of Hippias was prolonged for twenty-three years ; making a sufficient period in the whole to have habituated the Athenians to usurpation, and to have enabled him to transfer the sceptre to his children as easily as he received it from his father. Athens, thus converted, like the Ionian cities, into a tyranny,* would probably have offered no more effectual progress than they did to the Persian power, and without her assistance all Greece would have fallen under the dominion of the King.† To pursue the subject further would be both rash and useless : it is obvious that such an event would have exercised a most powerful influence over the subsequent history of mankind : to define that influence would be difficult to the most penetrating and comprehensive understanding, and the attempt would be presumption here.

In the Italian republics of the middle ages we find the age of Greece revived, though on a smaller scale and with diminished splendour. They exhibit in the same colours the results of multiplying small independent states, where every citizen may feel that he has an individual as well as a general interest in public affairs, and every city that she is concerned in the domestic quarrels of her neighbours. The effects of such a system are manifest alike in either country : the good, in the remarkable number of distinguished men produced by them ; the bad, in the prevalence of external aggression

* See Herod. iv. 137, for the change in policy arising from such a change in constitution.

† Βασιλεύς. The king, simply and by pre-eminence,—the title by which the Persian monarch was universally known in Greece.

and internal discord, signalised alike by political acuteness, unblushing profligacy, and revolting cruelty. Above all, Florence and Athens are naturally associated by their kindred eminence in art and literature; they were alike distinguished for the mercurial temper and lively imagination of their citizens, and political resemblances are not wanting to complete the comparison. The early changes in the Florentine constitution, the gradual depression of the nobles, by the rise of the commons to wealth and importance, their exclusion from public offices and honours, the elevation of a plebeian aristocracy upon the ruins of the feudal nobility, and the division of the commons into an oligarchical and a democratical party, are briefly and clearly related in Perceval's History of Italy, and may not inaptly be compared to the gradual subversion of the Athenian Eupatridæ. Towards the close of the fourteenth century, the oligarchy, headed by the family of Albizzi, succeeded in obtaining possession of the government, which it held for fifty years with a mild and undisturbed sway. But their opponents, though silent, were not crushed: as new families gained wealth by trade, they grew impatient of political inferiority and exclusion: and the Medici, one of the most distinguished houses of the popular nobles, who had long ranked in opposition to the Albizzi, were naturally regarded as the stay of the democratic cause. It was at this time that Cosmo de' Medici appeared in public life. The characters and adventures of this distinguished man and of his immediate descendants offer a singular number of coincidences with those of Pisistratus and his family.

At the beginning of the fifteenth century, Giovanni, the father of Cosmo, was the most distinguished person of his house and party. The great wealth which he had acquired by commercial adventure was set off by generosity and unblemished integrity: and though hereditarily opposed to the ruling faction, his own disinclination to interfere in politics, and the moderation of his opponents, left him in undisturbed possession of his riches and influence. To these his son Cosmo succeeded,

and being possessed of greater talents and a more stirring ambition, he took an active part in public life, and became the recognised leader of the popular party. The older heads, under whose temperate guidance Florence had enjoyed a long interval of tranquillity, were now deceased, and Rinaldo degl' Albizzi, a young man of inferior judgment and stronger passions, had succeeded to their influence. He observed and endeavoured to check the growing spirit of discontent, and thereby hastened a crisis which he was unprepared to meet. By his machinations Cosmo was brought to trial upon a frivolous and unfounded charge, and though his life, which was aimed at, was preserved by a judicious bribe, he was convicted and sentenced to banishment for ten years. He quietly submitted to the decree, and retired to Venice, where he was received with distinguished honour: but Rinaldo had miscalculated his strength; the next year a set of magistrates came into office who were attached to the Medici, and by them the dominant family was overthrown and expelled, and Cosmo triumphantly recalled.

The youth then of Pisistratus and of the Florentine commenced under the same political aspect, and was marked by the same adventures; but the advantage thus far is clearly on the side of the latter, who owed his first elevation to hereditary distinction and to his own merit, and his recall to the voice of his countrymen constitutionally expressed. And the resemblance of their youth holds good through their maturer years: they alike retained their sway to the end of a prosperous life, and alike employed it with beneficence and moderation; for though the triumph of Cosmo was not unstained by blood, and he hesitated not to ensure its stability, when threatened, by the exile of his opponents and the retrenchment of popular rights, yet his measures seem dictated by prudence, not by revenge: they are unpolluted by the atrocious cruelties so common in Italian party contests, and Florence prospered, and was respected under his administration. He avoided, even more than Pisistratus, the ostentation of that power which it would

have been nobler not to have possessed ; and presented to the world the spectacle of a merchant raised to the head of a powerful state, pursuing his original profession with industry and success, and declining the alliance of sovereigns to marry his children among his fellow-citizens, whom he treated as if they were in reality, no less than in appearance, his equals. No superior magnificence distinguished his establishment or his table ; but his wealth was profusely employed in distributing favours to all around him, until there was scarce a man of his party who was not bound to him by some personal tie. To this happy temper, and to the simplicity of his tastes and manners, he owes the enviable reputation which he has gained. Had he assumed the ostentation of a prince, which his riches and power might well have warranted, the obligations which he dispensed would have carried with them the impress of servitude. But men forgive injuries more easily than mortifications, and his fellow-citizens reconciled themselves to the unconstitutional superiority of one who treated them in every-day life as his equals, or displayed his elevation only in the extent of his generosity, and a freer cultivation and patronage of all that is fascinating in art and literature.

We have described Cosmo de' Medici as exercising a power little less than regal in a republic whose magistrates were changed every two months, and in which he neither possessed ostensible office and authority, nor that armed support which has often enabled usurpers to dispense with all other title. The reader, therefore, may be at a loss to understand the nature of his influence ; it is explained in the following passage. " The authority which Cosmo and his descendants exercised in Florence, during the sixteenth century, was of a very peculiar nature, and consisted rather in a tacit influence on their part, and a voluntary acquiescence on that of the people, than in any prescribed or definite compact between them. The form of government was ostensibly a republic, and was directed by a government of ten citizens, and a chief executive officer, called the gonfaloniere, or standard-bearer, who was chosen every two

months. Under this establishment the citizens imagined they enjoyed the full exercise of their liberties ; but such was the power of the Medici, that they generally either assumed to themselves the first offices of the state, or nominated such persons as they thought proper to those employments. In this, however, they paid great respect to popular opinion. That opposition of interests, so generally apparent between the people and their rulers, was at this time scarcely perceived at Florence, where superior qualifications and industry were the surest recommendations to public authority and favour ; and, satisfied that they could at any time withdraw themselves from a connexion that exacted no engagements, and required only a temporary acquiescence, the Florentines considered the Medici as the fathers, and not the rulers of the republic. On the other hand, the chiefs of this house, by appearing rather to decline than to court the honours bestowed upon them, and by a singular moderation in the use of them when obtained, were careful to maintain the character of simple citizens of Florence, and servants of the state. An interchange of reciprocal good offices was the only tie by which the Florentines and the Medici were bound, and perhaps the long continuance of their connexion may be attributed to the very circumstance of its being in the power of either of the parties at any time to have dissolved it.”* The state of things described in a former part of this passage corresponds with what the Greeks called tyranny, and in the same sense in which Pisistratus was tyrant of Athens, Cosmo and Lorenzo de’ Medici were tyrants of Florence. But in his remarks upon the nature of their power, Mr. Roscoe’s partialities appear to have led him astray. The Medici, from their brilliant qualities, were possessed of the affections of a large portion of their countrymen, and it so chanced, therefore, that the one were as ready to submit as the other to command. But it will scarcely be believed that the connexion with a family which had usurped the entire command of the

* Life of Lorenzo de’ Medici, chap. i.

state, the sole disposal of the magistracies, could have been dissolved at any time ; or indeed that it could ever have been dissolved, except by force of arms : and the praise of moderation, however applicable to the two elder Medici, is scarcely due to Lorenzo, who abolished even the shadow of a popular magistracy, and asserted the dependence of all functionaries upon himself,* whose expenditure was upon a scale of regal extravagance, and who made his country bankrupt to prevent the bankruptcy of his house. For he carried on the vast commercial establishment by which his grandfather Cosmo had acquired wealth ; but with such different success, that he was compelled to debase the national currency to raise means for meeting his mercantile engagements.

Cosmo, resembling Pisistratus in the elegance of his taste, lived, like him, at a time which enabled him to confer singular benefits upon society. To the Athenian we probably owe the preservation of Homer's poems in a connected form ; to the Florentine and to his family we are mainly indebted for those treasures of ancient literature which time has spared ; which, four centuries ago, were rapidly decaying in obscurity, or, by a more ignoble fate, were defaced to make room for lying legends and scholastic quibbles, until, early in the fifteenth century, a few enlightened spirits eagerly devoted themselves to rescuing what still remained. The vast wealth of Cosmo and his extensive correspondence were ever ready to be employed in the service of learning ; at the request of the men of letters, by whom he loved to be surrounded, his agents were continually charged to buy or to have copied whatever manuscripts could be found in Europe or Asia ; he founded public libraries, and among them that which is still named after his grandson, the Laurentian, and supported the cause of literature by affording countenance to all who cultivated it with success. His mansions were filled with gems, statues, and paintings, the master-pieces of ancient and modern art, and he was the friend no less than the pro-

* Sismondi, chap. xc.

tector of Donatello and Masaccio, to whom sculpture and painting respectively are much indebted for their rapid advance. Nor was he so much absorbed by these tastes, or by affairs of state, as to neglect his domestic concerns, and the flourishing condition of his estates of Careggi and Caffagiuolo bore witness to his skill and attention to agriculture, as did his foreign dealings to his mercantile knowledge and success.

Architecture, however, was his favourite pursuit. Like Pisistratus, he spent vast sums in ornamenting his city, and if his glory as a patron of the art be inferior to that of Pericles—if he cannot boast, like Augustus, that he found Florence of brick, and left it of marble, he has one claim to our praise which neither they nor probably any other public improver of ancient or modern times has possessed, namely, that the expenses of his works were defrayed from his private fortune. It appears from a memorandum of his grandson, Lorenzo, that in thirty-seven years their house had spent in buildings, charities, and contributions to the state, no less than 663,755 golden florins, equivalent to more than 1,300,000*l.* of the present day. The magnificent edifice known as the Riccardi palace was built by Michelozzi for Cosmo's residence; under his patronage the dome of the Florentine cathedral was reared; he built churches and convents, the enumeration of which would be tedious, and erected a palace upon each of his four country estates. To these retreats he betook himself in his declining years, and, estranged from politics and surrounded by men of letters, he passed the evening of his life in tranquillity, unmolested by any enemy except the gout. Its close alone was clouded by the death of his younger son, whom he regarded as the destined supporter of his name and grandeur, for the bad health of the elder incapacitated him for an active life; and the aged statesman, as he was carried through the vast palace which he had no longer strength to traverse on foot, exclaimed with a sigh, "This house is too large for so small a family." He died within a year of his son, in 1464, loved by his friends, and regretted even by his enemies, who dreaded

the rapacity of his partisans when restrained no longer by the probity and moderation of their chief; and Florence bore the best witness to his virtues, when she inscribed on his tomb the title of Father of his Country.

Piero de' Medici, his eldest son, in name succeeded to his father's influence; but owing to his infirmities he resided chiefly in the country, while, under shelter of the respected name of Medici, a few citizens monopolized the administration of justice and the management of the state, and converted both to their own private and corrupt emolument. He died in 1469, leaving two sons, Lorenzo, named the Magnificent, and Giuliano; the former being less than twenty-one years of age, and the latter five years his junior. Had the Florentines still been animated by their ancient spirit, there was now a most favourable opportunity for the recovery of liberty: but, under various pretexts, most of the distinguished families under whom the people might have ranked themselves had been driven into exile, and the personal virtues of Cosmo, and his unquestioned pre-eminence as a party leader, had laid the foundations of an hereditary influence, and prepared a way for the entire change of the constitution. So fully was the predominant party aware of this, that the men who had ruled Florence in the name of Piero, but without reference to his will, and who had embittered the close of his life by their profligacy and corruption, instead of profiting by the youth of his sons to shake off this nominal subjection, were eager to ascribe to them a power which they did not possess. They took measures to continue, under an empty name, a junto which assured to them the distribution of all places and the disposal of the revenue. The ambassadors who had been used to treat with Thomas Soderini, the citizens who had long been aware that their fortunes depended on his favour, hastened to visit him, upon the death of Piero. But Soderini feared to rouse the jealousy of his associates, and to weaken his party by accepting these marks of respect. He sent the citizens who waited on him to the

young Medici, as the only chiefs of the state ; he assembled the men of most importance, and presenting Lorenzo and his brother, advised them to preserve to those young men the credit which their house had enjoyed during thirty-five years, and suggested that it was far easier to maintain a power already strengthened by time than to found a new one.

The Medici received with modesty the marks of attachment and respect which were paid to them in the name of the commonwealth, and for several years they did not endeavour to assume an authority which ostensibly was centred in [the magistrates alone, and which could not be exerted in secret, except by men whose long services and known abilities ensured attention. For seven years Florence enjoyed domestic peace ; the Medici, divided between their studies and the tastes of youth, at one time entertained men the most distinguished in art and letters, at another amused the people with brilliant spectacles. But as they advanced to manhood, and took the administration into their own hands, their rule became more absolute, and their innovations on the constitution more obvious. They appointed a body of five electors, who named the magistracy without any reference to the people : they converted the *balia** into a permanent council, in whose hands they placed the legislative, the administrative, and judicial power ; and by its means they got rid of their enemies without legal proceedings, imposed new taxes at pleasure, and diverted the revenue to the maintenance of their commercial credit and the support of their luxury. Unwilling that any should enjoy consideration, excepting as it was derived from his own influence and favour, Lorenzo excluded from office, and depressed to the utmost of his power, all those whose rivalry seemed most to be feared, but especially the Pazzi, one of the noblest and most powerful families

* Upon any emergency, real or pretended, it was usual for the magistrates to convene the citizens, and procure the appointment of a *balia*, or extraordinary council, which possessed the absolute power of a Roman dictator.

of the state. At this period it contained nine men of mature age, and of the first rank in the city: yet since the death of Piero, but one of its members had been admitted to the magistracy. This exclusion was the more offensive because one of them had married Bianca, the sister of the Medici. Giuliano, whose temper was less ambitious, as his talents were inferior to his brother's, expressed his dissatisfaction at this conduct, and said to his brother, that he feared they should lose what they had by grasping at too much. It was believed also that Lorenzo had interfered with the course of justice to deprive Giovanni de' Pazzi of a rich inheritance which was justly his due; and Francesco, one of the brothers-in-law of Bianca, a man of violent and haughty temper, withdrew from Florence, and established a bank at Rome.

Sixtus IV., the reigning Pope, nourished also an inveterate hatred against the Medici, and under his auspices a conspiracy was formed to murder them and place Florence under the power of the Pazzi, in which Francesco Pazzi and Salviati, Archbishop of Pisa, were the chief actors.

* "The design of the conspirators was to assassinate both the brothers, Lorenzo and Giuliano, at the same instant, for the murder of one would otherwise only have the effect of putting the other on his guard.† The Pope

* It would have been more agreeable to the plan of this book to translate from the original accounts of Machiavelli, or Politiano, who was an eye-witness of the conspiracy; but their accounts are long and minute, not to say tedious, and would require much condensation; and we gladly avail ourselves of the brief and spirited narrative of Mr. Perceval.

† "Conspiring against one prince," says Machiavelli, "is a doubtful and dangerous undertaking; but to conspire against two at the same time must be either downright folly or madness:" and he enforces his principle by the examples of the Pazzi and of Harmodius and Aristogiton. "Pelopidas," he adds, "had ten tyrants instead of two to deal with:" it would be very dangerous, however, for any man to build on the success of this conspiracy, which, indeed, was almost

therefore wrote to the Cardinal Riario, nephew of Count Girolamo, a youth of only eighteen years of age, whom he had just admitted into the sacred college, and who was then studying at the University of Pisa, to desire him to obey whatever directions he should receive from the Archbishop of Pisa; and Salviati accordingly carried him to a seat of the Pazzi near Florence. The conspirators knew that the new Cardinal must be welcomed with public entertainments, at which they hoped that the Medici might be found present together, and despatched while unsuspecting of danger. Jacopo de' Pazzi gave a fête, to which both the brothers were accordingly invited: Lorenzo, however, alone came, for Giuliano was indisposed. But Lorenzo, as had been foreseen, made sumptuous preparations to receive the Cardinal at his villa at Fiesole; and there the conspirators fully resolved to execute their purpose. The entertainment took place, but still Giuliano was absent; and the Pazzi, thus again disappointed, and despairing of securing the presence of the younger Medici, at a second festival to be given by his brother, resolved to defer their enterprise no longer than the following Sunday, when the Cardinal was to be present at high mass at the cathedral of Florence; an occasion at which it was thought that neither of the Medici could with decency absent himself. There it was determined that, in the midst of the most solemn offices of religion, the crime of assassination should be perpetrated; that the elevation of the host, as the kneeling victims bowed their heads, should be the signal of murder; and that at the moment of the sacrifice, the Archbishop Salviati and others should seize the palace of the signiory, while Jacopo de' Pazzi was to raise the city by the cry of liberty. Francesco de' Pazzi charged himself, together with Bernardo Bandini, a daring and devoted partisan of his house, with the assassination of Giuliano. Giovanni

miraculous, and is mentioned by all writers who speak of it, as not only a rare, but almost unexampled event.—*Political Discourses*, book iii. chap. 6.

Battista Montesecco, a condottiere in the papal service, had boldly engaged with his single hand to despatch Lorenzo, while he understood that the murder was to take place at a festival. But when Montesecco found that it was before the altar of God that it was intended he should shed the blood of a man whose hospitality he had enjoyed, his courage failed him. The soldier declared that he dared not add sacrilege to murder and perfidy ; and his office was committed to two ecclesiastics, who had not the same scruples.

“ When the appointed morning arrived, the Cardinal Riario and Lorenzo de’ Medici were already at the cathedral, the church was rapidly filling with people, and still Giuliano de’ Medici did not appear. The conspirators began to dread another disappointment, and Francesco de’ Pazzi and Bernardo Bandini left the cathedral to seek for him, and to persuade him that his absence would be insidiously remarked. Every feeling which revolts at murder and treachery is strengthened, when we learn the terms of familiarity on which these men had just been living with him whom they were hurrying to death. They passed their arms round his waist, as if to draw him in playful violence towards the church, but in reality to feel whether he had put on his cuirass, which he wore with habitual timidity under his garments. But Giuliano was indisposed ; he had discarded his armour ; and so unsuspecting was he at that hour of impending evil, that he even left at home the dagger which usually hung at his side. As he entered the church and approached the altar, the two conspirators kept close to him ; the two priestly assassins had also fixed themselves in the throng beside Lorenzo ; and when the host was raised, and every knee was bending in adoration, Bandini struck his dagger into the breast of Giuliano. The victim staggered and fell, and Francesco de’ Pazzi threw himself upon him, with such blind fury, that besides inflicting on him several blows with his dagger, the least a death, he grievously wounded himself in the thigh. At the same moment the two priests attacked Lorenzo. One of them struck at his

throat, but missed his aim ; and the blow, which grazed the intended victim's neck, merely startled him to his defence.* Rapidly throwing his cloak about his left arm for a shield, he drew his sword and courageously defended himself until his attendants came to his aid. The priests then lost courage and fled : but Bandini, his dagger reeking with the blood of Giuliano, now endeavoured to rush upon Lorenzo, and stabbed one of his train to the heart, who interposed to defend him. Lorenzo, however, was by this time surrounded by his friends, who hastily sought refuge with him in the sacristy, and closed its brazen doors. Meanwhile the whole church was filled with consternation ; and the first moment of surprise and alarm had no sooner passed, than the friends of the Medici collected from all quarters, and conveyed Lorenzo in safety to his palace.

“ During this scene in the cathedral, the Archbishop Salviati, with a strong band of conspirators, attempted, as had been concerted, to seize the palace of the signiory and the persons of the magistrates. After filling the outer apartments with his followers, the archbishop obtained by his rank an easy admission to the presence of the gonfaloniere and priors who were sitting. But in-

* Machiavelli has drawn a shrewd caution to conspirators from the failure of the attack upon Lorenzo. “ It is necessary, in undertakings of this kind, to make use of men that have been sufficiently hardened and tried, and to trust no others, how courageous soever they may be accounted : for no man can answer even for his own resolution, if he have not thoroughly proved it before ; for the confusion he must naturally be in at such a time may either make him drop the dagger out of his hand, or say something which may have the same effect. Lucilla, sister to Commodus, having spirited up Quintianus to kill her brother, he waited for him as he came to the amphitheatre, and stepping up towards him with a drawn dagger in his hand, told him ‘ the senate had sent him that : ’ upon which he was immediately seized before he got near enough to stab him. Antonio de Volterra being fixed upon to kill Lorenzo de’ Medici, cried out, as he advanced to kill him, ‘ Ha ! traitor ! ’ which proved the preservation of Lorenzo, and the ruin of the conspiracy.”—*Political Discourses*, b. iii. 6.

stead of immediately attacking them he hesitated ; and his manner betrayed so much confusion, that the suspicion of the gonfaloniere being excited, he rushed from the hall and assembled the guards and servants of the palace. The doors were-secured, and the conspirators were furiously assaulted by the magistrates and their attendants with such motley weapons and instruments as the furniture of the palace afforded. Dispersed and intimidated, they made but a feeble resistance, and were all either slaughtered on the spot, hurled from the windows, or made prisoners. Jacopo de' Pazzi, followed by a troop of soldiery, attempted to succour them, after an abortive effort to excite the citizens to revolt by crying liberty through the streets. But the magistrates held the palace until numerous citizens came to their aid, and Jacopo, seeing that the game was lost, fled into the country.

“ The fate of most of the conspirators was not long delayed. The Archbishop Salviati was hanged from a window of the public palace, even in his prelatical robes. Francesco de' Pazzi, who, exhausted by loss of blood from his self-inflicted wound, had been obliged to confine himself to his uncle's house, was dragged from his bed, and suspended from the same place of execution. Jacopo himself, being discovered and arrested in the country by the peasantry, was brought into the city a few days afterwards, and similarly executed, with another of his nephews, whose knowledge of the conspiracy was his only crime, for he had refused to engage in it : and the whole of the devoted family of the Pazzi were condemned to exile, except Guglielmo, the brother-in-law of Lorenzo. The priests who had attacked Lorenzo, the condottiere Montesecco, and above seventy inferior persons besides, suffered death ; and even Bernardo Bandini, though he escaped for a time to Constantinople, paid the forfeit of his crimes ; for Lorenzo had sufficient interest with Mahomet II. to cause him to be seized and sent to Florence for execution. The young Cardinal Riario, rather an instrument than an accomplice in the conspiracy, was with difficulty saved by Lorenzo from

being torn to pieces by the fury of the Florentine mob ; but his attendants were mercilessly butchered by them."

The conspiracy of the Pazzi strikingly displayed the absoluteness of the Medician dominion over the will and affections of the people of Florence. So far from shewing any disposition to join the Pazzi in revolt, the populace were filled with grief and fury at the murder of Giuliano, and at the peril in which Lorenzo had stood. They had flown to arms to defend the Medici : and they paraded Florence for whole days to commit every outrage upon the dead bodies of the conspirators which still defiled the streets. The cry of "*Palle, Palle!*" the armorial device of the Medici,* continually resounded through the city ; and the memory of the tragedy wherein Giuliano had fallen, was always associated in the public mind with a deepened and affectionate interest for the safety of Lorenzo, and with an attachment to his person which lasted to his death.

We might perhaps search history in vain to find two families, whose fortunes, whose dispositions, and even whose tastes were so faithfully reflected in each other, as those of Pisistratus and Cosmo de' Medici. If we consider the younger Medici as immediately succeeding to their grandfather (and the concession is not important, for in the interval no political changes occurred in Florence), the resemblance between their fortunes, so far as we have traced them, is perfect. The founders of either house, after similar reverses, established tyrannies in their native cities, and yet lived and died beloved and respected by their countrymen, and delivered their usurped sovereignty peaceably to their successors. These successors were in either case two brothers, who instead

* The family arms of the Medici were six golden balls (*palle d'oro*). They asserted that this bearing was derived from the impressions left on the shield of one of their ancestors by a gigantic Saracen, who wielded a mace with six iron globes hung from it. Their detractors said that they were the arms of an apothecary, from whom the family derived the name of Medici, and that the golden balls were nothing better than gilded pills.

of running the usual course of jealousy and discord, exercised their joint power for years in harmony, and were at length separated by conspiracies which succeeded against the one, only to render more despotic the sway of the other. With respect to personal character, the resemblance between Pisistratus and Cosmo de' Medici has been fully dwelt upon. That between the brothers their descendants is necessarily less completely made out, for we know very little of the political conduct of the two Athenians; but we may observe the same hereditary love of art and literature, the same absence of jealousy, and the same superiority of one brother over the other in the cultivation of learning. The resemblance of their histories, so far as we have traced that of the Medici, fails only in one respect: the death of Hipparchus was due to his own intemperance, the murder of Giuliano de' Medici to the arbitrary measures of his brother.



CHAPTER VI.



Invasion of Scythia by Darius—Destruction of Crassus and his army by the Parthians—Retreat of Antony—Retreat and death of Julian—Retreat from Moscow.

DARIUS, son of Hystaspes, having gained possession of the vast empire which had been established by Cyrus, devoted his attention to the regulation of its internal policy: a task which we are led to believe he exercised with moderation and judgment. But the Persians were a warlike nation, less advanced in civilization than their sovereign; hence his care of the finances of the empire degraded him in their eyes, and comparing his character with that of their former princes, while they called Cyrus the father, and Cambyses the master, they denominated Darius the broker of the empire. It was probably under the knowledge of these feelings, that his wife,

Atossa, daughter of Cyrus, thus addressed him :* “O king, though possessed of such ample means, thou sittest still, and gainest increase for the Persians neither of subjects nor power. But it befits a young man who is the master of vast resources, to manifest his worth in the performance of some mighty act, that the Persians may fully know they have a man for their king. Now, therefore, it profiteth thee twofold to do thus, both that the Persians may understand there is a man at their head, and also that they may be harassed by war, and for lack of leisure may not conspire against you. And now thou mightest distinguish thyself during thy youth, for the spirit groweth with the growing body ; but it ageth also with the aging body, and is blunted towards all action.” Darius answered, “All these things which thou hast suggested, I have resolved to perform, for I mean to build a bridge from this mainland to the other, to march against the Scythians, and within a little while all these things shall be accomplished.” Atossa replied, “Do not go first against the Scythians, for they will be at your disposal at any time ; but for my sake lead an army against Greece. For I have heard reports of the Grecian women, and wish much to have female slaves of Lacedæmon, and Argos, and Corinth, and Athens.”

Some time elapsed before Darius was at leisure to pursue his schemes of conquest ; but after the Babylonian rebellion was quelled, when the prosperity of Asia was at its height, he determined to invade the Scythians under pretence of revenging the desolating incursion of their ancestors into Media, a century before. With this view he sent orders throughout his dominions, to some nations

* Herod. iii. 134.—The style of Herodotus is highly dramatic, and we by no means intend to say that such a conversation took place, though there are circumstances attendant on the narrative which may satisfactorily answer the natural question, how came it to be reported and known ? But whether we believe it to be genuine or not, it embodies a plausible reason for an expedition which seems at variance with the character of Darius, and probably contains the grounds on which Herodotus accounted for it.

that they should prepare infantry, others a fleet, others construct a bridge across the Thracian Bosphorus, in which a Grecian artist, Mandrocles of Samos, was employed. The fleet, which was contributed by the Asiatic Greeks, he sent on to the Ister, or Danube, with orders to construct a bridge there also, which was done, two days' sail from the mouth of the river; the land forces* he himself conducted through Thrace. Darius, though a wise prince, was not exempt from that inordinate spirit of boasting which has beset the eastern sovereigns in all ages. At the source of the river Tearus, where are hot and cold medicinal springs issuing from the same rock, he caused a column to be set up, with this inscription:—"The fountains of Tearus pour forth the best and fairest water of all rivers, and thither, on his march against the Scythians, came the best and fairest of all men, Darius, son of Hystaspes, King of the Persians, and of all the continent." Another instance of this spirit occurs, when he ordered a pile of stones to be raised at the river Artiscus, as a monument of the magnitude of his army, each individual being ordered to contribute one stone to the heap. Passing onward,† he crossed the Ister, and entered Scythia, leaving the Ionians behind to protect his return, but with permission to depart home, unless he should reap-

* They are said by Herodotus to have consisted of 700,000 men, horse and foot; the fleet of 600 ships.

† Some curious particulars remain concerning the Getæ, whom he encountered on his march. They believed in the immortality of the soul, as taught them by their lawgiver Zalmoxis, or as the name is otherwise read, Zamolxis, and in a future state of happiness. Every fifth year they sent a messenger to inform Zalmoxis, whom they had deified, of their wants, in this manner. Choosing a man by lot, they first give him full instructions as to the purport of his embassy, and then certain men, taking him by the hands and feet, toss him in the air, others hold three spears placed so that he might fall upon them. If he die immediately, Zalmoxis is thought to be favourably disposed; if not, they call the messenger a scoundrel, and proceed to make trial of somebody else.

pear within sixty days. The Scythians did not attempt open resistance ; they blocked up the wells and springs, and destroyed the forage throughout the country ; and taking advantage of their own wandering habits, harassed the Persians by leading them a fruitless chase in pursuit of an enemy who seemed always within reach, and yet could never be overtaken. After wandering over a vast extent of desert, Darius began to weary of so unprofitable an occupation, and indulging a hope, perhaps, that the enemy would be complaisant enough to change their tactics for his own convenience, sent the following message to Idanthysrus, the Scythian king : “ O wonderful man, why wilt thou still fly, having the choice of these two things ? If thou esteemest thyself capable to stand up against me, abide, and do battle ; but if thou acknowledgest thyself to be the weaker, even then desist from flight, and come to my presence, bringing earth and water, gifts due to your master.” The proposal was conceived in the spirit of our own chivalrous ancestors, and from them might have met with a prompt acquiescence ; but Idanthysrus was not to be piqued into an act of imprudence, and in truth more wisdom is visible in his reply than in the request which led to it. “ O Persian, this is my way : hitherto I have never fled for fear of any man, neither do I now fly before thee, nor act otherwise than I am wont in peace. And I will tell thee wherefore I decline a battle. We have neither towns nor tilled land, in defence of which we are compelled to fight ; but if it be of importance to thee to bring us to battle, lo, there are the tombs of our ancestors ; find them out, and endeavour to destroy them, and thou shalt then know whether we will fight for our sepulchres, or whether we will not. But, until this, unless we ourselves see reason, we will not fight. So much for fighting. For masters, we own none, save Jupiter, my ancestor, and Vesta, Queen of the Scythians. And instead of sending earth and water, I will send you such a present as befits the occasion ; but as for calling thyself our master, I say, go hang.”* Now the Scythians were very angry at the bare

* The reader may compare the following passage [of

mention of servitude, and sent one division to commune with the Ionians who guarded the bridge, while the rest of them, instead of still retreating before the Persians, began to harass them by desultory attacks, in which the Scythians had always the advantage over the Persian cavalry; but when these fell back upon the infantry, they were secure from further molestation. These attacks were made continually by night and day. And now, says Herodotus, I will mention a very strange thing, that was of great service to the Persians against these assaults. Scythia produces neither ass nor mule, neither are there any such throughout the country, by reason of the cold. The noise of the asses therefore disordered the Scythian cavalry, and very often in a charge, when the horses heard them bray, they would start and fly aside in terror, pricking up their ears, for that they had never seen the like, nor heard such a sound. At length, when the country was exhausted, and it was known that Darius was in want, the Scythian princes sent a herald, bearing a present of a mouse, a bird, a frog, and five arrows. The Persians asked what was the meaning of this offering;

Froissart, chap. xviii. The English army were in pursuit of the Scots, then employed in ravaging Northumberland under the Earl of Douglas, who was strongly posted upon a hill side, with a deep and rocky river in his front. "And there were harauldis of armes sent to the Sottis gyvyng them knowledge if that they would come and passe the ryver to fight with them in the playne felde, they wolde draw backe fro the ryver, and gyve theym sufficient place to arraynge theyr batelles, eyther the same day, or els the next, as they wolde chuse them selfe, or els to lette them do lyke wyse, and they wolde come over to them. And whan the Scottis harde this they toke counsell among theymselfe: and anon they answered the harauldis, how they wolde do nother the one nor the other, and said, syrs, your kyng and his lordis se well how we be here in this realme, and have burnt and wasted the countrey as we have passed through, and if they be displeased therewith, lette them amend it whan they wyll, for here we wyll abide, as long as it shall please us." Challenges of this sort were often given in the days of chivalry, and not unfrequently accepted.

but he replied, that his orders were merely to deliver it and depart immediately; and bade them, if they were skilled in such things, discover what these gifts should signify. Now Darius thought that the Scythians surrendered to him themselves, their land, and waters, arguing thus: that a mouse dwells in the earth, living on the same food as man, and a frog in the water, and that a bird is likeliest to a horse, and the arrows meant that they delivered up to him their power. But Gobryas conjectured that it meant this: "Unless, O Persians, you should become birds and soar into the skies, or mice and sink beneath the earth, or frogs and leap into the water, never shall ye return home, being stricken by these arrows." Now that division of Scythians which had been sent to confer with the Ionians, when they arrived at the bridge, said, "Ye men of Ionia, we bring you liberty, if you will hearken to us. For we hear that Darius bade you depart home, after you had watched the bridge sixty days, if he should not return within that time: now therefore by so doing you will be free from blame, both towards him and towards us." And when the Ionians had promised to do so, the Scythians returned in all haste.

Idanthyrus, after sending the above alarming intimation, changed his tactics, and offered battle to Darius. It chanced that while the hostile armies were drawn up, waiting for the signal to engage, a hare jumped up from among the Scythians, who broke their ranks and joined unanimously in the chase. Darius inquired from what cause such a tumult arose, and hearing that the enemy were engaged in hunting the hare, he said to his confidential advisers, "These men hold us in great contempt; and now methinks Gobryas has spoken rightly concerning the Scythian presents. Since, therefore, things are so, we need good advice, how may we retreat in safety." Gobryas made answer, "O king, I was pretty well acquainted by report with the poverty of these men, and now I am the more convinced of it, seeing how they make sport of us. Therefore it seems best to me, to light our fires as usual, so soon as the night comes on, and then shackling the asses, and leav-

ing them behind, with such as are least able to bear fatigue, to depart before the Scythians can reach the Danube to destroy the bridge, and before such a plan, which might be our ruin, can be resolved upon by the Ionians." This advice gave Gobryas: and when it was night, Darius left in the camp all those who were wearied, and of whose death least account was made, together with the asses, under pretence that he would himself attack the enemy with the flower of the army, and that the others should remain to protect the camp. So the Scythians seeing the fires, and hearing the asses as usual, suspected nothing: but the next morning, when the deserted Persians came and made submission, they set out with all speed, and arrived at the Danube before Darius, who had wandered from the direct way. Then they said, "Ye men of Ionia, ye act unjustly in staying here after the days that were numbered have passed away. Hitherto you have remained through fear; but now, destroy the bridge, and depart with all haste, rejoicing in your freedom, and acknowledging your obligation to the gods and the Scythians. And him that was heretofore your master we will so handle, that from henceforth he shall wage war upon no man." Therefore the Ionians took counsel; and Miltiades the Athenian (the same who afterwards commanded at Marathon) that was their leader, and ruler over the Thracian Chersonese, was minded to take the counsel of the Scythians, and thus set free Ionia. But Histæus, of Miletus, said, on the contrary, that now each of them that were in council was ruler over his own city through the influence of Darius, which being destroyed, neither he himself nor any of them would retain his sovereignty, for every city would choose the government of the many rather than of one. Those, therefore, that had adopted Miltiades' opinion, now came over to that of Histæus, and it was resolved to break up the Scythian end of the bridge for the distance of a bowshot, that they might appear to comply with what had been requested, and thus be secured from all attempts to destroy it. Histæus therefore replied, "O Scythians, you bring good advice, and urge it at a

seasonable moment, and as your proposition guides us to our advantage, even so we are inclined to follow it carefully. For, as you see, we are breaking up the bridge, and we will manifest all zeal, desiring to be free. But while we are thus employed, it is fit time for you to go in search of the Persians, and to exact the vengeance that is due both to us and to you." So the Scythians, a second time giving credit to the Ionians for speaking the truth, returned in quest of the Persians, but missed their track; so that the latter arrived at the passage without interruption, but coming there by night, and finding the bridge broken, they were thrown into much alarm lest the Ionians should have deserted them. There was in Darius's train an Egyptian, whose voice was louder than that of any known man. Darius bade him stand on the bank, and call Histæus the Milesian, who heard him at the first shout, and reconstructed the bridge, so that the army passed over in safety. And the Scythians, judging of the Ionians from these transactions, say, on the one hand, that they are the basest and most unworthy of all freemen; and on the other, reckoning them as slaves, that of all such they best love their masters, and are least disposed to run away.*

If Darius's real object was to extend his empire, or take revenge upon the Scythians, his failure was complete and humiliating; if undertaken on the ground suggested by Atossa as a measure of policy, a safety-valve to guard against the explosion of Persian turbulence, his purpose probably was fully answered in the loss and suffering which the army underwent. But whatever were his motives, he escaped more easily and creditably than most generals who have presumed to contest the possession of their deserts with the numerous and active cavalry of Tartary and Persia. Troops of the highest character, irresistible where their proper arms and discipline can be made available, have often sunk under the fatigue and hardships of warfare against a new enemy, under a new sky, and have been conquered by circumstances, almost

* Herod. lib. iv. c. 83—142. j

without the use of the sword. By varying the climate and natural features of the earth—by giving man a frame which, notwithstanding the wonderful flexibility which adapts it equally for the snows of Greenland and the vertical splendour of the torrid zone, is ill calculated for violent and sudden changes, Providence has set bounds in some degree to the march of ambition, and often turned the triumph of the conqueror into mourning. We shall devote the rest of this chapter to relating a few of the most striking disasters which have occurred from the neglect of these considerations, and the rash invasion of regions where the elements, the face of the country, or the manners of its inhabitants have presented invincible obstacles to the success of the attacking army.

The unfortunate expedition of Crassus against the Parthians furnishes us with a second testimony to the valour of the Scythian hordes. Expelled or emigrating from Scythia Proper, that tribe long dwelt to the eastward of the Caspian Sea, and successively obeyed the Mede, the Persian, and the Macedonian dynasties, until at length they shook off the yoke of the last, and planted a new race upon the throne of Cyrus. The motives of avarice and ambition which led Crassus to the fatal enterprise in which he fell, are well known. From the first he was marked out for destruction by superstitious terrors: as he quitted Rome he was solemnly devoted by a tribune to the infernal gods; ill-omened prodigies attended the passage of the Euphrates, and even the exhortations of the general were so equivocally worded, that, instead of raising, they damped the courage of his soldiers. Instead of penetrating through the friendly country of Armenia, where the mountains would have protected him from the enemy's cavalry, and the king had promised not only a large reinforcement, but to provide food for the consumption of the Romans, Crassus was induced, by the treachery of a pretended friend, to plunge into the deserts of Mesopotamia, the region of all others best adapted to the operations of his enemies. We shall not detain the reader with the particulars of his advance, which for some

time was unopposed ; but when he was fairly involved in that inhospitable region, the enemy was not long in making his appearance.

“ The enemies seemed not to the Romans at the first to be so great a number, neither so bravely armed as they thought they had been. For concerning their great number, Surenas* had of purpose hid them with certain troops he sent before ; and to hide their bright armour he had cast cloaks and beasts’ skins over them ; but when both the armies approached near the one to the other, and that the sign to give charge was lift up in the air, first they filled the field with a dreadful noise to hear ; for the Parthians do not encourage their men to fight with the sound of a horn, neither with trumpets, but with great kettle-drums, hollow within, and about them they hang little bells and copper rings, and with them they all make a noise everywhere together ; and it is like a dead sound mingled as it were with the braying or bellowing of a wild beast, and a fearful noise as if it thundered, knowing that hearing is one of the senses that soonest moveth the heart and spirit of any man, and maketh him soonest beside himself. The Romans being put in fear with this dead sound, the Parthians straight threw the clothes and coverings from them that hid their armour, and then showed their bright helmets and cuirasses of Margian tempered steel, that glared like fire, and their horses barbed with steel and copper. And Surenas also, general of the Parthians, who was a goodly personage and valiant as any other in all his host, though for his beauty somewhat effeminate, showed small likelihood of such courage : for he painted his face and wore his hair after the fashion of the Medes, when the other Parthians drew their hair back from the forehead in the Scythian manner to look more terrible. The Parthians at the

* This seems to be not a name, but a title of office, belonging to the commander-in-chief of the Parthian army, as the appellation Brennus is supposed to have denoted a similar office among the Gauls

first thought to have set upon the Romans with their pikes, to see if they could break their first ranks. But when they drew near, and saw the depth of their battell standing close together, firmly keeping their ranks, then they gave back, making as though they fled, and dispersed themselves; and yet, before they were aware, environed them on every side; whereupon Crassus commanded his shot and light-armed men to assail them; the which they did: but they went not far, they were so beaten in by arrows, and driven to retire to their force of the armed men. And this was the first beginning that both feared and troubled the Romans when they saw the vehemency and great force of the enemy's shot, which brake their armours, and ran through everything it hit, were it never so hard or soft. The Parthians, thus still drawing back, shot altogether on every side at adventure: for the battell of the Romans stood so neare together, as, if they would, they could not miss the killing of some. These bowmen drew a great strength, and had much bent bowes, which sent the arrows from them with a wonderful force.* The Romans by means of

* This description will bring to the reader's recollection the skill of our own ancestors in the use of this destructive weapon, which mainly contributed to many of their most celebrated victories. The following extract relates to the battle of Crecy. "Ther were of the genowayes (a) cros-bowes about a fiftene thousand, but they were so wery of goying a fote that day, a six leages, armed with their cros-bowes, that they sayde to their constables, we be nat well ordred to fyght this day, for we be nat in the case to do any grete dede of arms, we have more nede of rest:—these wordes came to the erle of Alencon, who sayd, a man is well at ease to be charged with such a sort of raskalles, to be faynt, and fayle now at most nede. . . . When the genowayes were assembled toguyder, and beganne to approche, they made a grete leape, and crye, to abasshe thenglysshemen, but they stode styll, and styredde nat for all that: than the genowayes agayne the second tyme made another leape, and a fell crye, and stepped forward a lyttell,

(a) Genoese.

these bowes were in hard state, for if they kept their ranks they were grievously wounded : again, if they left them, and sought to run upon the Parthians to fight at hand with them, they suffered none the less, and were

and then glysshemen remeued nat one fote : thirdly agayne they leapt, and cryed, and went forth tyll they came within shotte ; than they shotte feersly with their crosbowes ; than then glysshe archers stept forth one pase, and lette fly their arowes so holly and so thicke, that it seemed snow : when the genowayes felte the arowes persynge through heedes, armes, and brestes, many of them cast downe their crosbowes, and dyde cut their strings, and retourned dyscomfited. When the French kynge sawe them flye away, he sayd, slee these raskalles, for they shall let and trouble us without reason : than ye shulde have seen the men at armes dasshe in amonge them, and kylled a grete nombre of them : and ever styll the englysshemen shot whereas they saw thickest preace ; the sharp arowes ranne into the men of armes, and into their horses, and many fell, horse and men, amonge the genowayes : and whan they were downe, they coulede nat relyve again, the preace was so thicke that one overthrewe another.”—*Froissart*, chap. 130.

So at the battle of Homildoun, Percy wished to charge the Scots, who were drawn up upon a hill, but the Earl of March retained him, and bid him open their ranks by archery. “Then the English archers marching against the Scots, *stitched them together* with arrows, and made them bristle like a hedgehog, as it were with thorns and prickles ; the hands and arms of the Scots they nailed to their own lances, so that with that sharp shower of arrows some they overthrew, others they wounded, and very many they slew. Upon which the valiant Sir John Swinton exclaimed, as with the voice of a herald, ‘My noble fellow-soldiers, what has bewitched you, that you give not way to your wonted gallantry : that you rush not to the mellay, hand to hand, nor pluck up heart like men, to attack those who would slaughter you with arrows, like hinds in a park. Let such as will go down with me, and in God’s name we will break into the enemy and so either come off with life, or else fall knightly with honour.’”—(*Fordun*, *Scotichr.* lib. xv. cap. 14.) One manuscript adds, “I have never heard nor read that the English in fair field beat an equal number of Scots

no nearer to effecting anything. For the Parthians, in retreating, yet cease not from their shot, which no nation but the Scythians could better do than they. And it is an excellent contrivance that they do fight in their flight, and thereby shun the shame of flying. The Romans still defended themselves, and held it out so long as they had any hope that the Parthians would leave fighting when they had spent their arrowes, or would joyne battel with them. But after they understood that there were a great number of camels laden with quivers full of arrowes, where the first that had bestowed their arrowes fetched about to take new quivers; then Crassus, seeing no end to their shot, began to faint, and sent to Publius his son, willing him to charge upon the enemies before they were compassed in on every side. For it was on Publius' side that one of the wings of the enemies battell was nearest unto them, and where they rode up and down to compasse them behind. Whereupon Crassus' sonne, taking thirteene hundred horsemen with him (of the which a thousand were of the men of armes whom Julius Cæsar sent) and five hundred shot, with eight ensignes of footmen having targets, wheeling about, led them unto the charge. But they seeing him coming, turned straight their horses and fled, either because of the steadiness of his array, or else of purpose to beguile this young Crassus, enticing him thereby as far from his father as they could. Publius Crassus seeing them flie, cryed out, 'These men will not abide with us;' and so spurred on for life after them. Now the horsemen of the Romans being trained out thus to the chase, the footmen also were not inferior in hope, joy, or courage. For they thought all had been won, and that there was no more to do but to follow the chase: till they were gone far from the army, and then they by charge of lance, but very often by the thunder-shower (*fulminatione*) of their arrowes. Let the latter therefore beware of waiting the flight of archery, but hasten to close combat, even as Sir John Swinton then did." This is the story which Sir Walter Scott has worked up into his poem of Halidon Hill

found the deceit. For the horsemen that fled before them suddenly turned again, and a number of others besides came, and set upon them. Whereupon they stayed, thinking that the enemies, perceiving they were so few, would come and fight with them hand to hand. Howbeit the Parthians drew up again them their men at armes, and made their other horsemen wheele round about them, keeping no order at all : who gallopping up and down the plain, whirled up the sand-hills from the bottom with their horses' feet, which raised such a wonderful dust, that the Romans could scarce see or speak to one another. For they being shut up into a little roome, and standing close one to another, were sore wounded with the Parthian arrowes, and died of a cruell lingering death, crying out for anguish and paine they felt ; and being still harassed by the shot thereof, they died of their wounds, or striving by force to pluck out the forked arrow-heads that had pierced farre into their bodies through their veines and sinewes, thereby they opened their wounds wider, and so injured themselves the more. Many of them died thus, and such as died not were not able to defend themselves. Then when Publius Crassus prayed and besought them to charge the men at armes with the barded horse, they shewed him theirs hands fast nailed to the targets with arrowes, and their feet likewise shot through and nailed to the ground ; so as they could neither flie, nor yet defend themselves. Thereupon himself encouraging his horsemen, went and gave charge, and did valiantly set upon the enemies, but it was with too great disadvantages, both for offence and also for defence. For himself and his men, with weak and light staves, brake upon them that were armed with cuirasses of steele, or stiff leather jackes. And the Parthians, in contrary manner, with mighty strong pikes gave charge upon these Gaules, which were either unarmed, or else but lightly armed. Yet those were they in whom Crassus most trusted, and with them did he wonderfull feates of war. For they seized hold of the Parthians' pikes and took them about the middles and threw them off their horse, being scarce able to stir for

the weight of their harnesses;* and there were divers of them also that lighting from their horse crept under their enemies' horse bellies, and thrust their swords into them, which flinging and bounding in the aire for very paine, trampled confusedly both upon their masters and their enemies, and in the end fell dead among them. Moreover extream heat and thirst did marvellously comber the Gauls, who were used to abide neither of both: and the most part of their horses were slain, charging with all their power upon the Parthian pikes.

“At the length, they were driven to retire towards their footmen, and Publius Crassus among them, who was very ill by reason of the wounds he had received. And seeing a sand-hill by chance not farre from them, they went thither, and setting their horses in the midst of it, compassed it in round with their targets, thinking by this means to cover and defend themselves the better from the barbarous people: howbeit, they found it contrary. For the country being plain, they in the foremost ranks did somewhat cover them behind, but they that were behind standing higher than they that stood foremost (by reason of the nature of the hill that was highest in the midst) could by no means save themselves, but were all hurt alike, as well the one as the other, bewailing their inglorious and unavailing end. At that present time there were two Grecians about Publius Crassus, Hieronymus and Nicomachus, who dwelt in those quarters, in the city of Carrhæ: they both counselled Publius Crassus to steale away with them, and flie to a city called Ischnæ, that was not farre from thence, and took the Romans' part. But Publius answered them, that there was no death so cruel as could make him forsake those that died for his sake.† When he had so

* In European warfare, overthrown knights were often unable to rise from the incumbrance of their ponderous defences, and not very unfrequently suffocated by dust, heat, and want of air.

† Examples of a similar high sense of honour might be multiplied from the history of chivalry. Once during his crusade Richard Cœur-de-Lion saw a party of Templars sur-

said, wishing them to save themselves, he embraced them, and took his leave of them: and being very sore hurt with the shot of an arrow through one of his hands, commanded his shield-bearer to thrust him through with a sword, and so turned his side to him for the purpose. And most part of the gentlemen that were of that company, slew themselves with their own hands. And for those that were left alive, the Parthians got up the sand-hill, and fighting with them thrust them through with their speares and pikes, and took but five hundred prisoners. After that, they struck off Publius Crassus' head, and thereupon returned straight to set upon his father, Crassus, who was then in this state.

“Crassus, the father, after he had willed his son to charge the enemies, and that one brought him word he had broken them, and pursued the chase; and perceiving also that they that remained in their great battell, did not presse upon him so neare as they did before, because that a great number of them were gone after the

rounded and overmatched by Saracens, and being unarmed, sent some of his barons to support the Christians until he himself should be ready for combat. “Meanwhile an overpowering force of the enemy came up, and when he arrived at the field, the danger appeared so imminent, that he was entreated not to hazard his own person in the unequal contest. The king replied, his colour changing with his boiling blood, ‘Sith I have sent dear comrades to battle with a promise of following to assist them, if, as I have engaged, I do not defend them with all my strength, but being absent, and wanting, which Heaven forbid, they should meet death, I will never again usurp the name of king.’ So with no more words, rushing into the midst of the Turks like a thunderbolt, he pierced through, and cut them down and dispersed them, and then with many prisoners and his friends delivered, he returned to the camp.”—(*Broad Stone of Honour*, book iv. p. 174.)—So also the Marquis de Villena, a distinguished warrior of the court of Ferdinand of Arragon, being asked by Queen Isabella why he had exposed his own life to save a trusty servant nearly overpowered by odds, replied, “Should I not peril one life to serve him, who would have adventured three, had he possessed them, for me?”

other ; he then took courage, and keeping his men close, retired with them the best he could by a hill's side, looking ever that his sonne would not be long before that he returned from the chase. But Publius seeing himselfe in danger, had sent divers messengers to his father, to advertise him of his distresse, whom the Parthians intercepted, and slew by the way ; and the last messengers he sent escaping very hardly, brought Crassus newes that his sonne was but cast away, if he did not presently aid him, and that with a great power. But in the meane time the enemies were returned from his son's overthrow with a more dreadfull noise, and cry of victory than ever before, and thereupon their deadly sounding drummes filled the air with their wonderful noise. The Romans then looked straight for a hot alarme ; but the Parthians that brought Publius Crassus' head upon the point of a lance, coming neere to the Romans, showed them his head, and asked them, in derision, if they knew what house he was of, and who were his parents : for it is not likely, said they, that so noble and valiant a young man should be the son of so cowardly a father as Crassus. This sight killed the Roman hearts more than any other danger throughout all the battell. For it did not set their hearts on fire, as it should have done, with anger and desire of revenge, but far otherwise, made them quake for fear. Yet Crassus selfe shewed more glorious in this misfortune than in all the warre beside. For riding by every band, he cried out aloud, 'The grief and sorrowe of this losse, my fellowes, is no man's but mine, mine onely : but the mighty fortune and honour of Rome remaineth still unvincible, so long as you are yet living. Now, if you pity my losse of so noble and valiant a son, my good soldiers, shew this in fury against the enemy ; make them dearly buy the joy they have gotten ; be revenged of their cruelty, and let not my misfortune fear you. For why ! aspiring minds sometime must needs sustaine losse.'

"Crassus, using these persuasions to encourage his soldiers for resolution, found that all his words wrought none effect ; but contrarily, after he had commanded

them to give the shout of battell, he plainly saw that their heartes were done, for that their shout rose but faint, and not all alike. The Parthians on the other side, their shout was greate, and lustily they rang it out. Now when they came to joyne, the Parthians' horsemen wheeling all round the Romans, still galled them with their archery, while their men at armes, giving charge upon the front of the Romans' battell, with their great lances compelled them to draw into a narrow roome, a few excepted that valiantly and in desperate manner ran in among them, as men desiring, though they could do the enemy but little harm, rather to die quickly by a mortal wound. So were they soone dispatcht, with the great lances that ranne them through, head, wood and all, with such a force as oftentimes they ranne through two at once. Thus when they had fought the whole day, night drew on, and made them retire, saying that they would give Crassus that night's respite, to lament and bewaile his sonne's death: unlesse that otherwise he, wisely looking about him, thought it better for his safety to come and offer himself to King Arsaces' mercy, than to tarry to be brought to him by force. So the Parthians camping hard by the Romans, were in very good hope to overthrow them the next morning."

In this miserable condition the only hope of safety lay in the immediate prosecution of their retreat under cover of the night; and this measure was accompanied by the melancholy necessity of abandoning their wounded men to the mercy of an implacable enemy. Crassus, overcome with sorrow, laid himself down with his head covered, and would see no man. His chief officers, therefore, among whom was Cassius, afterwards celebrated as one of the murderers of Cæsar, held a council of war, and resolved upon immediate departure; a step which held out the greater prospect of security, as the Parthians never attacked by night, nor indeed took up their quarters in near neighbourhood even to the weakest enemy, for they used no sort of fortification or defence, and if attacked in the dark their cavalry was difficult to

be equipped and their skill in archery useless.* Those of the Romans who were capable of marching, retreated without further loss to the town of Carrhæ; but the Parthians slew all that were left, to the number of 4000 and upwards. Surena, lest the fugitives should outstrip him by immediate flight, had recourse to a fraudulent negotiation, which was insultingly broken off as soon as his end was answered, and his troops collected before the city. Escape, therefore, was now more difficult than ever, and Crassus' evil fortune, or want of penetration, led him again to place confidence in a traitor, who informed the enemy of the period fixed for departure, and completed his villainy by entangling the army in a morass. Cassius, mistrusting this man, returned to Carrhæ. His guides advised him to remain there until the moon were out of the sign of Scorpio; but he answered, "I fear the sign of Sagittarius (*the archer*) more," and, departing immediately, escaped to Assyria with 500 horsemen. Crassus, and the main body of the army, after long struggling, had overcome the difficulties in which they were involved, and were within a few furlongs of the hills, when they were overtaken and attacked by the Parthians.

"Then compassing Crassus in the midst of them, covering him round with their targets, they spake nobly, that never an arrow of the Parthians should touch the body of their general, before they were slain, one after another, and that they had fought it out to the last man in his defence. Hereupon Surena, perceiving the Parthians were not so courageous as they were wont to be, and that if night came upon them, and that the Romans

* So Xenophon says, in the *Anabasis*, that the Persians never encamped less than 60 stadia (6 or 7 miles) from the Greeks. "The Persian army is a bad thing by night. For their horses are tethered, and shackled also for the most part, that they may not run away if they get loose: and if there be any disturbance, the Persian has to saddle and bridle his horse, and mount him loaded with his armour, which is all difficult by night, especially in any tumult. For these reasons they encamped away from the Grecians."

did once recover the high mountains, they could never possibly be met withall againe: he thought cunningly to beguile Crassus once more by this device. He let certain prisoners go of purpose, before whom he made his men give out this speech, that the King of Parthia would have no more mortal war with the Romans; but far otherwise; he rather desired their friendship, by shewing them some notable favour, as to use Crassus very courteously. And to give colour to this bruit, he called his men from fight, and going himself in person towards Crassus with the chiefest of the nobility of his hoast, in quiet manner, his bow unbent, he held out his right hand, and called Crassus to talk with him of peace, and said unto him, 'Though the Romans had felt the force and power of their king, it was against his will; howbeit that now he was very willing and desirous to make them taste of his mercy, and was contented to make peace with them, and to let them go where they would.' All the Romans besides Crassus, were glad of Surena's words. But Crassus, that had been deceived before by their crafty fetches and devices; considering also no cause apparent to make them change thus suddenly, would not hearken to it, but first [consulted with his friends. Howbeit the soldiers, they cried out on him to go, and fell at words with him, saying that he would fain set them to fight with an enemy, with whom he had not the heart to talk unarmed. Crassus tried entreaty first, saying that if they would but persevere for the remainder of the day, they might depart at night through the mountaines and straight passages, where their enemies would not follow them: and pointing them the way with his finger, he prayed them not to be faint-hearted, nor to despair of their safety, seeing they were so neare it. But in the end, Crassus perceiving that they fell to mutiny, and, beating of their harnesse, did threaten him if he went not, fearing there they would do him some villainy, went towards the enemy, and coming backe a little, said only these words: 'O Octavius, and you, Petronius, with all you Roman gentlemen that have charge in this army, you all see

now how I against my will am enforced to go to the place I would not, and can witnesse with me how I am driven with shame and force; yet I pray you, if your fortunes be to escape this danger, that ye will report wheresoever you come, that Crassus was slaine, not delivered up by his own soldiers into the hands of the barbarous people, but deceived by the fraud and subtilty of his enemies.'

"Octavius would not tarry behind on the hill, but went down with Crassus: but Crassus sent away his sergeants that followed him. The first that came from the Parthians unto Crassus were two mongrell Grecians, who, dismounting from their horse, saluted him, and prayed him to send some of his men before, and Surena would shew them, that both himself and his train came unarmed towards him. Crassus thereto made him answer, that if he had made any account of his life, he would not have put himself into their hands. Notwithstanding he sent two brethren before, called the Roscii, to know what number of men, and to what end they met so many together. These two brethren came no sooner to Surena but they were staid, and himselfe in the mean time kept on his way a horsebacke, with the noblest men of his army. Now when Surena came neare to Crassus, 'Why, how now,' quoth he, 'what meaneth this? a consul and lieutenant-generall of Rome on foot, and we on horseback!' Therewithal he straight commanded one of his men to bring him a horse. Crassus answered Surena again: 'In that neither of them offended, each coming to the meeting according to the custom of his country.' Surena replied, 'As for the treaty of peace, that was already agreed upon between the king Hyrodes and the Romans: howbeit that they were to go to the river and there to set down the articles in writing; for you Romans,' said he, 'do not greatly remember the capitulations you have agreed upon.' With those words, he gave him his right hand. As Crassus was sending for a horse; You shall not need, saith Surena, for, look, the king doth present you with this. And straight one

was brought him, with a golden bridle ; upon which his grooms mounted Crassus immediately, and following him behind, lashed his horse to make him run the swifter. Octavius, seeing that, first laid hand on the bridle, then Petronius ; and after them, all the rest of the Romans also gathered about Crassus to stay the horse, and to take him from them by force, that pressed him on of either side. So they thrust one at another at the first very angrily, and at the last fell to blowes. Then Octavius drew out his sword, and slew one of the barbarous noblemen's horsekeepers ; and another came behind him, and slew Octavius, and on the other side came Pomaxæthres, one of the Parthians, and slew Crassus. As for them that were there, some of them were slain in the field fighting for Crassus, and others saved themselves by flying to the hill. The Parthians followed them, and told them that Crassus had paid the paine he deserved, and for the rest, that Surena bad them come down with safety. Then some of them yielded to their enemies ; and others dispersed themselves when night came, and of them very few escaped with life. Others being followed and pursued by the natives, were all put to the sword. So as it is thought there were slain in this ; overthrow above twenty thousand men, and ten thousand taken prisoners."*

Not many years subsequent to this signal overthrow the Roman eagle again swooped upon Assyria, and was again compelled to wing back its disastrous flight to a more congenial soil and climate. Encouraged by the Syrian victories of his lieutenant Ventidius (the only Roman down to the time of Trajan who ever celebrated a triumph over the Parthians), and desirous to efface the stain upon the empire's honour by extorting the

* North's Plutarch ; Life of Crassus. This statement of numbers, though large, is not incredible, since the army originally consisted of seven legions, besides 4000 horse and as many light-armed infantry ; and few appear to have effected their escape.

restoration of the captured standards and prisoners, Antony led into Media an army of 100,000 men. But his enterprise, like those of his predecessors, proved barren alike of profit or renown : for if he could boast that the enemy, far from gaining any advantage over his veteran troops, were uniformly baffled and repulsed during a long and dangerous retreat, yet that retreat proved as calamitous as the advance had been useless ; and the hardships of the desert were scarce less fatal to him than the Parthian arrows to Crassus.

“ When they came to go down any steep hills, the Parthians would set upon them with their arrowes, because they could go down but fair and softly. But then again, the soldiers of the legion, that carried great shields, returned back and enclosed the light-armed in the midst amongst them, and did kneel one knee upon the ground, and so set downe their shields before them ; and they of the second rank also covered them of the first rank, and the third also covered the second ; and so from ranke to ranke all were covered. Inso-much that this manner of covering and shading themselves with shields was devised after the fashion of laying tiles upon houses, and to sight was like the steps of a theatre, and is a most strong defence and bulwarke against all arrowes and shot that falleth on it. When the Parthians saw this countenance of the Roman soldiers of the legion which kneeled on the ground in that sort upon one knee, supposing that they had beene wearied with travel, they laid down their bowes, and took their spears and launces, and came to fight with them man for man. Then the Romans suddenly rose upon their feete, and with the darts that they threw from them they slew the foremost, and put the rest to flight, and so did they the next day that followed. But by means of these dangers and letts, Antonius’ army could win no way in a day, by reason whereof they suffered great famine : for they could have but little corne, and yet were they daily driven to fight for it ; and besides that, they had no instruments to grind it, to make bread of it. For the most part of them had been left

behind, because the beasts that carried them were either dead or else employed to carry them that were sore and wounded. For the famine was so extream great, that the eighth part of a bushell of wheate was sold for fifty drachmas,* and they sold barley bread by the weight of silver. In the end they were compelled to live on herbes and roots; but they found few of them that men do commonly eat of, and were enforced to taste of them that were never eaten before: among the which there was one that killed them, and made them out of their wits. For he that had once eaten of it, his memory went from him, and he knew not what he did, but only busied himself in moving and turning over every stone that he found, as though it had been a matter of great weight. All the campe over, men were busily stooming to the ground, digging and carrying off stones from one place to another; but at the last, they cast up a great deal of bile, and suddenly died, because they lacked wine, which was the only soveraigne remedy to cure that disease.”†

Such were their suffering till they crossed the Araxes and gained the rich and friendly country of Armenia. The retreat from Phraata, or Phraaspa, the extreme point of advance, a distance of three hundred miles, had occupied twenty-seven days, and been signalized by eighteen battles. On mustering the army it was found that twenty thousand infantry and four thousand horse, nearly a quarter of the whole force, had perished by the joint effects of sickness and the sword.

After a long series of wars waged with various success during a period of four hundred years, the plains of Assyria again beheld the destruction of a Roman army under circumstances of still greater interest. The emperor Julian, redoubted for his brilliant victories in Gaul and Germany, advanced with a veteran army of sixty-five thousand soldiers, to avenge the insulted majesty of the

* Nominally about 1*l.* 13*s.*; but calculations of this sort convey little instruction, unless the relative value of the precious metals, then and now, were known.

† North's Plutarch; Life of Antony.

empire, and retaliate upon the Persian monarch (for a Persian dynasty again occupied the throne of Darius, long held by a Grecian, and then by a Parthian conqueror) for the invasion of Mesopotamia, in the reign of his predecessor Constantius. He directed his march towards Ctesiphon,* where he crossed the Tigris, and advanced into the central provinces, in hope, like Alexander at Arbela, to rest the issue of the war on the event of a single battle. Up to this point success attended his arms; but now the evils which had destroyed his predecessors began to work their fatal effect on him; wherever he turned the country was laid waste, the treachery of his guides caused him to spend several days in fruitless wandering, which diminished the already scanty stores of the army, and at length, without a blow being struck, he found himself compelled to give the signal for retreat.

“The very morning, however, upon which the army began to retrace its steps, a cloud of dust appeared in the distant horizon. Many thought that it was caused by the troops of wild asses which abound in those regions; others more justly augured from it an enemy’s approach. Being thus uncertain and fearful lest by advancing they should fall into some snare, the emperor put an early stop to their march, and the night was spent in watchfulness and continual alarm. At sunrise, the glitter of distant armour announced the presence of the royal forces, and the day was spent in a succession of desultory and unsuccessful attacks. In the evening the Romans

* A city founded by the Parthians as the capital of their empire, on the eastern bank of the Tigris, nearly opposite to Seleucia, which was built shortly after the death of Alexander by Seleucus Nicator, and intended as the capital of the East. The history of Julian’s campaign is full of interest, and will repay the perusal. It has, however, no particular connexion with the subject of this chapter, which has already reached length sufficient to preclude the introduction of extraneous matter, and we therefore are compelled to take up the narrative of Julian’s proceedings only at the point where his misfortunes commenced.

arrived at a small town abounding in provisions, where they spent two days. Resuming their march, upon the first day they were exposed only to the same interruptions as before, but upon the third day, when the army had reached the district called Maranga, about dawn there appeared a vast multitude of Persians, with Merenes, general of the cavalry, two sons of the king, and many of the chief nobility.

“All the troops were armed in iron, every limb being protected by thick plates, the rigid joinings of which were adapted to the joints of the body; and a mask, fashioned to resemble the face, was so carefully fitted upon their heads, that, their whole bodies being plated with metal, the darts which struck them could pierce nowhere, except at the eyes or nostrils, before which there were narrow apertures for sight and breathing. Those who were armed with lances remained immoveable, as if fixed with brazen chains: while near them the archers (from its very cradle the nation has grown powerful by its great reliance on that art) stretched their supple bows, with disparted arms, till the string touched their right breasts, while their left hands were in contact with the arrow head; and the shafts, thus skilfully driven, flew shrilly whistling, charged with deadly wounds. After them the affrighted mind could hardly bear the fearful aspect and savage yawns of the glittering elephants; by whose roar and smell, and unusual appearance, the horses were yet more terrified. Those who guided them wore hafted knives tied to their right hands, remembering the injury received from these animals at Nisibis; * that if the frantic animal became unmanageable by his driver, to prevent his carrying destruction into the ranks of his own army, as then happened, they might pierce the spine, where the skull is connected with the neck. For it was long ago discovered by Hasdrubal, the brother of Hannibal, that such was the speediest way of killing

* At the siege of Nisibis, in the invasion of Mesopotamia above mentioned, the elephants being brought up to the attack of a breach, became unmanageable from pain and terror, and did much damage to the assaulting force.

these beasts. All this being observed, not without much dread, the emperor proceeded with all confidence to draw up the infantry for battle in a half-moon with curving flanks;* and lest the advance of the archers should scatter our close array, he broke the efficacy of their arrow-flight by a rapid onset; and the word to engage being as usual given, the dense infantry of Rome dashed in the firm front of the enemy by a most spirited charge. The conflict growing hot, the clang of shields, and the melancholy crash of men and armour, leaving now no room for inactivity, covered the ground with gore and corpses; but the slaughter of the Persians was the greatest, who being often slack and faint in close conflict, fought at heavy disadvantage when foot was opposed to foot; though they use to battle bravely at a distance, and if they find themselves compelled to give way, deter the enemy from pursuit by a shower of arrows shot behind them. The Parthians then being routed by their overpowering strength, our soldiery, long since relaxed by a blazing sun, at the signal of recall went back to their tents, inspirited to higher daring for the future. In this battle the Persian loss appeared, as I have said, to be the greater; our own was very light." Milton has a gorgeous description of the Parthian power and method of making war, in which his immense learning is profusely introduced to illustrate this subject

"The Parthian king
In Ctesiphon† hath gathered all his host
Against the Scythian, whose incursions wild
Have wasted Sogdiana; to her aid
He marches now in haste: see though from fa
His thousands, in what martial equipage
They issue forth; steel bows and shafts their arm
Of equal dread in flight, or in pursuit;
All horsemen, in which fight they most excel;

* *Lunari acie, sinuatisque lateribus occursuros hosti manipulos instruebat.*

† Ctesiphon—see note, p. 214. Sogdiana, the northern province of the Parthian empire, adjoining Scythia.

See how in warlike muster they appear,
In rhombs and wedges, and half-moons and wings.

“He looked, and saw what numbers numberless
The city gates out-poured, light-armed troops
In coats of mail and military pride;
In mail their horses clad, yet fleet and strong,
Prancing their riders bore, the flower and choice
Of many provinces from bound to bound^d
From Arachosia,* from Candaor east,
And Margiana to the Hyrcanian cliffs
Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales,
From Atropatia, and the neighbouring plains
Of Adiabene, Media, and the south
Of Susiana, to Balsara’s haven.
He saw them in their forms of battle ranged,
How quick they wheeled, and flying, behind them shot
Sharp sleet of arrowy showers against the face
Of their pursuers, and overcame by flight;
The fields, all iron, cast a gleaming brown:
Nor wanted clouds of foot, nor on each horn
Cuirassiers all in steel for standing fight,
Chariots or elephants indorsed with towers
Of archers, nor of labouring pioneers
A multitude, with spades and axes armed
To lay hills plain, fell woods, or valleys fill
Or where plain was raise hill, or overlay
With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke;
Mules after these, camels, and dromedaries,
And waggons fraught with utensils of war. }

* Arachosia, now Arakhaj, one of the eastern provinces of Persia, separated by Candahar (Candaor) from the Indus. Margiana, a province of Parthia, south of the Oxus, and rather between that river and the Caspian Sea. Iberia lies between the Caspian and Black seas, south of Caucasus. Atropatia is south of Iberia, separated from Armenia by the Araxes. Adiabene is the western part of Babylonia. The poet proceeds southward through Media to Susiana, the province of Susa, on the lowest part of the eastern bank of the Tigris, to Balsara, a celebrated city and emporium of the East; having completed the circuit of the Parthian empire, except the deserts forming its southern boundary, between the Persian Gulf and Arachosia, where he began.

Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp
 When Agrican with all his northern powers
 Besieged Albracca, as romances tell,
 The city of Gallaphrone, from thence to win
 The fairest of her sex, Angelica
 His daughter, sought by many prowrest knights
 Both Paynim and the peers of Charlemain.
 Such and so numerous was their chivalry.”*

“After the battle,” Ammianus continues, “three days being passed in repose, that each might cure his own or his neighbour’s wounds, intolerable want of victuals began to afflict us; and the burning both of corn and green crops having reduced men and horses to the extremity of distress, a large part of the provisions brought by the chief officers of the army for their own use was distributed to the indigent soldiery. And the emperor, who, in place of delicacies prepared with regal luxury, satisfied his hunger under a small tent, with a scanty portion of meal and water, which even the labouring common soldier would have disdained; careless of his own safety, performed whatever services were required in the tents of his poor comrades. Then having withdrawn awhile to an anxious and uncertain repose, devoted not to sleep, but to some literary work, written in the camp, and under the tent-skins, in emulation of Julius Cæsar, in the dead of night, while deeply meditating upon some philosopher, he beheld, as he acknowledged to his friends, that vision of the genius of the empire which he had seen in Gaul, when about to reach the dignity of Augustus,† pass sorrowfully from the tent in mourning habit, his head and horn of abundance covered with a veil. For a moment he was fixed

* *Paradise Regained*, iii. 300—344.

† The night before Julian consented to accept the imperial purple at the hands of his rebellious army, he saw in a vision (so at least he told his friends) one with the attributes of the tutelary genius of the empire. The phantom complained that hitherto his desire to serve the sleeper had been frustrated, and warned him to accept the proffered dignity as he valued the continuance of his care and protection.

in amazement; yet, superior to all fear, he commended futurity to the gods. As he rose from his lowly couch, to supplicate the powers of heaven with the rites deprecatory of misfortune, a blazing torch appeared to flash across the sky, and vanished, leaving him filled with horror lest it were the star of Mars which thus openly menaced him.”*

Before daybreak he consulted the Etruscan soothsayers, who still retained the monopoly of this profitable art, concerning the meaning of this portent. They replied that on no account should anything be commenced, in obedience to the rules of their science, which forbade the giving battle, or undertaking military operations, subsequent to the appearance of such a meteor: but the emperor neglected their predictions, and gave order to march. Taught by experience not rashly to close with the firm ranks of the legions, the Persians hovered all around, and while Julian, unarmed by reason of the heat, advanced to reconnoitre in front, he was alarmed by tidings of an attack upon the rear. Forgetful or careless of his want of armour, he hurried to the spot, which was scarcely reached when a fresh alarm came that the van, which he had quitted, was similarly menaced, and at the same moment the iron-clothed Parthian cavalry, supported by elephants, dashed in upon the flank. The light-armed troops, encouraged by their sovereign's presence, rushed forwards, and put to flight these formidable assailants; and while Julian, forgetting the prudence of a general in his ardour, cheered them on, a dart grazed his uplifted arm, and penetrated deep into his unprotected side. He tried to draw it out, but the sharp edges cut the tendons of his fingers; and falling in a swoon from his horse, he was borne back by his attendants to the camp. The prince being withdrawn, it is scarce credible with what ardour the soldiery, heated by rage and anger, flew to their revenge, and though the dust blinded them, and the heat relaxed their sinews, yet, as if released from discipline by the fall of their

* Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xxv. 2.

leader, they rushed prodigal of life upon the enemies' steel. The Persians, on the other hand, shot still more eagerly, till they were almost hidden by the constant arrow flight; while the bulk and nodding plumes of the elephants stationed in their front struck terror into horse and man. Night put an end to a bloody and indecisive contest, in which fifty of the chief Persian nobility fell, including the two generals, Merenes and Nohodares.

This success, however, was dearly purchased by the death of Julian, which occurred soon after he reached the camp. He made a short address to those officers who surrounded his bed, expressing his willingness to die, and a hope that the empire would devolve on a worthy successor, declining to interfere, or in any way direct their choice; and breathed his last while arguing upon the nature of the soul. Among the tumult and intrigues consequent upon the election of a new emperor, Jovian, a household officer of the highest rank, was chosen, rather as a means of reconciling the disputes of others of higher pretensions, than for his personal merits, which rose not above mediocrity. The news of Julian's death was carried to Sapor the Persian king by deserters, and he, inspired by the death of his most formidable enemy, pursued the retreating army with increased vigour. On one occasion the heavy-armed horse and elephants broke the Jovian and Hereulean legions which had been trained to war in the able school of Diocletian; on another the Persian cavalry broke into the camp, and penetrated almost to the emperor's tent. At length, after five days of constant harass and alarm, they reached the town of Dura on the Tigris. Four days were here consumed in repelling the unceasing attacks of the Persians, until the army, impatient of this daily annoyance, hopeless of bringing the enemy to battle, and stimulated by a notion that the Roman frontier was at no great distance, impatiently demanded permission to recross the Tigris. The emperor and his officers in vain pointed out to them the river swollen by the summer floods, and entreated them not to trust it dangerous whirlpools: they represented that most of the troops were unable to swim,

and showed the enemy, who lined the opposite bank of the overflowed river. But when these arguments proved vain, and dissatisfaction seemed ready to end in mutiny, a reluctant order was given that the Gauls and Germans, trained to the passage of rapid rivers from their youth, should first risk the attempt; in expectation that the others' obstinacy would be overcome by the spectacle of their fate, or else that their success would embolden and encourage the less able. Accordingly, as soon as the fall of night concealed their purpose, they passed the river, swimming or supported by skins, occupied the opposite bank, and made slaughter of the Persians, who had been lulled to sleep by the fancied security of their position. Their comrades, informed of their success by signal, were only restrained from emulating their courage and success by the engineers undertaking to construct a bridge upon inflated hides. But these attempts were baffled by the strength of the stream, and at the end of two days, all sorts of food being consumed, the soldiery, reduced to want and desperation, were loud in complaint of the ignoble death for which they were reserved.

This would have been the time for a vigorous and decisive blow; but the Persian king was staggered in his confidence by the Romans' obstinate and successful resistance. The destruction among his troops had been severe; the loss of elephants unequalled in any former war: while his foes were seasoned and encouraged by a continuance of successful resistance, and, instead of being intimidated by the death of their noble general, seemed rather to consult revenge than safety, careless whether they were extricated from their difficulty by a brilliant victory or a memorable death. These considerations, and the yet unbroken power of the empire, induced him to send ambassadors to treat of peace. But the conditions proposed were hard and humiliating, and four days were spent amid the agonies of famine in fruitlessly discussing what was best to be done, which if diligently employed would have brought the army into the fruitful district of Corduene, distant but a hundred and fifty miles from the scene of their sufferings. Five provinces

situated east of the Tigris were to be given up, together with three important fortresses in Mesopotamia, *Castra Maurorum*, *Singara*, and *Nisibis*, the latter uncaptured since the Mithridatic wars, and regarded as the especial key of the East. The strong expression of Ammianus is, that it would have been better to have fought ten battles, than to have surrendered one of these things. But a crowd of flatterers surrounded the timid prince ; they urged the necessity of a speedy return, lest other pretenders to the empire should start up, and his weak and easy temper was readily persuaded to acquiesce.

The delay occasioned by these negotiations, in which, in return for such important concessions, even the safe passage of the Tigris was not provided for, proved fatal to numbers, who, impatient of the sufferings which they endured, plunged secretly into the stream, and were swallowed up by its eddies, or, if they reached the shore, were slain or sold into a distant captivity by the Saracens and Persians. And when at last the trumpet gave the signal of passage, it was wonderful to see how every one hurried to escape the danger which they still feared upon the eastern bank. Wicker vessels hastily constructed, to which their beasts of burthen were attached, or the hides of sheep and oxen, were the precarious means of transport to which most were reduced : the emperor and his suite crossed in a few small boats which had laboriously accompanied the march, and continued to ply backwards and forwards, as long as any remained upon the farther shore. News came meanwhile that the Persians were constructing a bridge, with intent of falling suddenly and secretly upon the exhausted enemy ; but either the intelligence was false, or the betrayal of their intention caused the Persians to desist from the meditated treachery, and Jovian, released from this apprehension, arrived by long and fatiguing marches at the town of *Hatra*, of ancient fame in the wars of *Trajan* and *Severus*. From hence, for seventy miles, an arid plain extended, offering only salt, fetid water, and the bitter, nauseous herbs of the desert : and such provision as opportunity afforded was made for the further march by filling the water

vessels, and slaughtering camels and other beasts of burthen. But a six days' march, through a country where not even grass was to be found, reduced them to extremity ; and it was with no small joy that they hailed a convoy of provisions, doubly welcome as providing for the relief of present distress, and assuring the fidelity of Procopius and Sebastian, the powerful officers whom Julian had sent to co-operate with him in Armenia. Passing Thilsaphata the army at length reached Nisibis, and found an end of its distresses under the walls of the city, which the emperor was unwilling, perhaps ashamed, to enter.

In all these cases the thirst of conquest worked its own punishment by subjecting its votaries to the guidance of will instead of reason, and like all other passions, when indulged, misleading them both as to the character and the probable consequence of their actions. The expedition of Darius is said, indeed, to have been prompted by policy ; but we look in vain for prudence and sound judgment in his unavailing pursuit of the Scythians, in his protracted stay, in the treacherous abandonment of a part of his army, or in his hurried retreat ; while his resolution (if Herodotus be credited) of destroying the bridge, and thus, in case of reverses, cutting off all hope of escape, could only have been suggested by a frantic presumption in his own power and fortune. In the other cases an eager desire and hope of terminating the war by one decisive blow, and a well-grounded confidence that in fair field no troops would stand the shock of the Roman legions, stifled the voice of common sense, of wisdom and of experience, which concurred in teaching that the desired opportunity was attainable only by the enemy's misconduct, and that the failure of success necessarily involved severe misfortune. We may draw from hence a lesson touching the pernicious influence of power and prosperity upon the mind. The warning of Amasis to Polycrates* contains valuable instruction, though we re-

* Polycrates, tyrant of Samos, 'was remarkable for the favourable issue of all his undertakings. Amasis, king of

ject the superstitious and unworthy notion of the Deity upon which it is founded, and the equally superstitious remedy proposed. It is true that a life of unbroken prosperity is frequently terminated by some memorable reverse, but the effect of such prosperity upon ourselves is the greatest of evils, and the parent of all the others which may befall us : and this chapter may be considered as a supplement to the one which has been devoted to the effects of absolute power upon the morals and intellect ; for the judicial blindness produced by an inferior degree of grandeur and good fortune resembles that species of insanity which we have noticed, and differs from it rather in degree than in nature. History abounds in examples of such infatuation ; the most striking and perhaps the most important of them, it has been reserved for our own age to witness.

If ever there was an instance of a powerful mind

Egypt, wrote thus to him : “ It is pleasant to hear of the good fortune of a friend and connexion ; but your extraordinary prosperity pleases not me, knowing, as I do, that the Deity is envious : and I would have those for whom I am interested meet both with success and failure, and think a chequered life better than unclouded fortune. For I have never heard of any man who, being prosperous in all things, has not at last perished miserably, root and branch. Be persuaded, then, and take this precaution against your good fortune ; select whatever you have most valuable, and would most regret to lose, and so bestow this that it shall never come to man again ; and if, in future, good and evil fortune are not blended, remedy it in the manner which I now propose.” Polycrates took the advice and cast into the sea an engraved gem of extraordinary value ; and within a few days a fish was presented to him within which the gem was found. Amasis, hearing of it, renounced all friendship and connexion with him, as a man predestined to an evil fate. The event must have strongly confirmed the notion from which the advice proceeded ; for Polycrates having given offence to the satrap of Sardis, or, as is more likely, being considered too powerful and dangerous a neighbour to remain on the Ionian coast, was entrapped into that nobleman’s power, and crucified by him.—Herod. iii. 40.

delivered over for its ruin to a strong delusion, it is to be found in Napoleon's campaign in Russia. An unparalleled series of victories appears to have confirmed the turn of his mind to fatalism, and to have inspired a belief that no difficulties were insuperable by his genius and fortune. It is in such a belief, and in his natural resoluteness of purpose, aggravated into inflexibility by the habit of dictating to all who came within his widely extended sphere, that we must look for the explanation of conduct into which no man would have been betrayed while in the full and sane possession of his judgment, however just and unbounded his confidence in himself and his troops. That he was fully aware of the difficulties which he was about to meet (it is impossible that they should have escaped his penetration) is evident from his own declarations. "For masses like those we are about to move, if precautions be not taken, the grain of no country can suffice. The result of my movements will be to assemble four hundred thousand men on a single point. There will be nothing to expect from the country, and it will be necessary to have everything within ourselves."* Immense preparations were accordingly made, but made in vain, for a very small portion of them ever reached the borders of Russia, and those too late to supply the needs of the army. It is here that the obstinacy and infatuation of which we have spoken first appear. Too impatient to wait for the supplies which he had declared indispensable, and unable to resist the temptation of endeavouring to gain his object by one decisive stroke, Napoleon plunged headlong into a savage country, without a commissariat, and with a most insufficient hospital department, and suffered grievous loss before an enemy was even seen. Without anything approaching to a general action, the effective force under his immediate command was reduced in six weeks, between the passage of the Niemen and his departure from Witepsk, from two hundred and ninety-seven thousand to one hundred and eighty-five

* Scott, vol. vii. p. 215.

thousand ; and was besides in so shattered and unsoldier-like a condition, that a fortnight later, at Smolensk, Napoleon himself declared halt or retreat to be impracticable. "This army cannot stop: with its composition, and in its disorganized state, movement alone supports it. We may advance at its head, but not stop or retreat. It is an army of attack, not of defence ; of operation, not of position."* The desperate enterprise was therefore pursued, and the nominal victory of Borodino, which cost in killed and wounded thirty thousand men, gave Moscow into his hands—the specious prize which he hazarded so much to gain. But the advantages hoped from its possession vanished when in his grasp, and this seeming success proved but a snare to disguise his failure, and ensure destruction by delaying retreat.

We probably shall never be satisfied as to the real origin of the conflagration of Moscow. If the voluntary act of the Russian people, it deserves to be classed, with the abandonment of Athens, among the noblest acts of patriotism recorded ; but with this difference, that the Athenians trusted their property to the victor's mercy, the Russians inflicted on themselves the utmost losses of war, rather than allow an invader to profit by the shelter of their homes. That a rugged but deep love of their country did animate even those among them who had least to love, is certain. Palaces and hamlets were alike committed to the flames ; the serf and the prince were equally indignant at their national injuries. "It is an admitted fact, that when the French, in order to induce their refractory prisoners to labour in their service, branded some of them in the hand with the letter N. as a sign that they were the serfs of Napoleon, one peasant laid his hand upon a block of wood, and struck it off with the axe which he held in the other, in order to free himself from the supposed thralldom."†

Napoleon depended on the possession of Moscow as a sure means of dictating peace to Russia on his own terms. As formerly at Vienna and Berlin, he expected to give

* Segur, liv. vi. chap. 6.

† Scott, p. 301.

laws in the Kremlin to a conquered nation ; and his disappointment in finding this vantage-ground crumble under his feet was extreme. It was lost, however, irrecoverably lost, for the Russians had no longer anything to hope or fear for their capital, and Moscow, ruined and deserted, was no place for the invader to pass a five-months' winter in. Policy therefore prompted an immediate retreat, sufficient time being allowed to refresh and re-organize the army ; but Napoleon still clung with obstinacy to his original plan of dictating a peace to Alexander from his capital, and sacrificed a fortnight of precious time to this deceitful hope. It was frustrated ; the Russian monarch refused to listen to any overtures of peace, and the French, who on the 12th of September had hailed Moscow as the goal of their labours, quitted it on the 19th of October, to retrace their steps over a ravaged country through a numerous and exasperated enemy.

We must touch very lightly upon the horrors of the retreat, confining ourselves to a brief statement of the leading facts, and of the results of the whole. Famine, cold, and the sword combined to punish an unjust aggression. When the French left Moscow they numbered one hundred and twenty thousand men under arms, with an immense train of baggage and camp followers : in twenty-six days, from October 19th to November 13th, when the Emperor quitted Smolensk, their organized force was reduced to thirty-six thousand men, and they had lost three hundred cannon. Napoleon's partisans have tried to shelter him from blame, by alleging the premature rigour of winter as the cause of this wholesale destruction. No doubt cold was the main agent in it, but the nature of a Russian winter was well known, and should have been considered in the scheme of the campaign ; and so far was it from being premature, that the frost did not begin till November 7th, only three days before the French van and the Emperor arrived at Smolensk. Other causes aided to produce this result. Napoleon intended to return to the above-named town by the unwasted route of Kalouga and Medyn, but the

Russian army barred his way, and, after an obstinate contest,* turned him back on the ravaged country through which he had already passed. Here neither food, shelter, nor clothing could be procured, and thousands fell victims rather to the want of all appliances to bear it, than to the intolerable severity of the winter itself. Numbers fell in battle, or were intercepted and slain, or made prisoners by the ever active hostility of the Cossacks who hovered round their march: still the loss sustained in warfare was small in comparison to that which resulted from the combined operation of hunger and cold. The appearance of this new enemy, and its effects, moral and physical, are powerfully, though rather theatrically, described by the Comte de Segur, himself a sharer in the miseries which he describes.

“On the 6th of November the sky declared itself. Its azure disappeared. The army marched enveloped in cold vapours, which soon thickened into a vast cloud, and descended in large flakes of snow upon us. It seemed as if the sky were coming down, and uniting with this hostile land and people to complete our ruin. All things are indistinguishable; while the soldier struggles to force his way through the drifting whirlwind, the driven snow fills up all hollows, and its surface conceals unknown depths which yawn under our feet. The men are swallowed by them, and the weakest, resigning themselves to fate, there find a grave. Those who follow turn aside, but the storm dashes in their faces the snow from heaven and the drift from the earth, and seems to oppose itself rancorously to their march. The Russian winter under this new form attacks them from all sides; it pierces their thin dress and torn shoes. Their wet clothes freeze on them, a sharp and strong wind impedes their breath, which at the instant of expiration forms round the mouth icicles depending from the beard. The

* It is curious that Kutusoff and Napoleon were actually retreating from Malo-Yarowslavitch, the scene of the battle, at the same moment; the one fearing another attack, the other despairing of success in forcing the position.

wretches, shivering, still drag themselves on, till the snow which clogs their feet, or some chance obstacle, causes them to stumble and fall. There they groan in vain: the snow soon covers them; slight elevations alone distinguish them: behold their graves! Everywhere the road is strewn with these undulations like a burial-ground: the most fearless, the most unfeeling are moved, and turn aside their eyes as they pass in haste. But before, around, every thing is snow—the sight is lost in this immense and sad uniformity; the imagination is astounded: it is like a huge winding-sheet, with which nature envelops the army. The only objects which appear from out it are sombre pines, trees of the tombs, with their funereal verdure; and the gigantic fixedness of their black trunks and their deep gloom complete this desolate aspect of a general mourning, and of an army dying amid the decease of nature. . . . Then comes the night, a night of sixteen hours! But on that snow which covers all things, one knows not where to stop, where to rest, where to find roots for food, or dry wood for firing. However, fatigue, darkness, and repeated orders stop those whom their own physical and moral force, and the efforts of their officers, have retained together. They seek to establish themselves; but the ever-active storm scatters the first preparations for a bivouac. The pines, laden with hoar-frost, resist the flames; and the snow upon them, mixed with that which falls continually from the sky, and that lying on the earth, which melts with the efforts of the soldier and the first effect of the fires, extinguishes those fires and the strength and courage of the men.

“When the flame at length is raised, officers and soldiers prepare around it their sad meal, composed of lean and bloody fragments of flesh, torn from wornout horses, and, for a very few, some spoonfuls of rye flour diluted with snow-water. The next day soldiers, laid stone-dead in circles, mark the bivouacs, and the ground about them is strewn with the bodies of many thousand horses.

“From this day, men began to reckon less upon each

other. In this army, lively, susceptible of all impressions, and inclined to speculate from its advanced civilization, disorder soon gained footing, discouragement and insubordination spread rapidly, the imagination wandering without bounds in evil as well as good. Henceforward at every bivouac, at every difficult passage, some portion of the yet organized troops detached itself, and fell into disorder. Yet there were some who resisted this mighty contagion: they were the officers, subalterns, and seasoned soldiers. These were extraordinary men; they encouraged themselves by repeating the name of Smolensk, which they felt they were approaching, and where everything had been promised to them.

“Thus since this deluge of snow, and the redoubled cold which it announced, all, officers and soldiers alike, preserved or lost their strength of mind, according to their age, their character, and temperament. He of our chiefs, whom till then we had seen the strictest in maintaining discipline, now found himself no longer in his element. Thrown out of all his fixed ideas of regularity and method, he was reduced to despair by so universal a disorder, and judging sooner than others that all was lost, he felt himself ready to abandon all.”*

The army quitted Smolensk in four divisions: that under the command of the Emperor, which led the way, marched on the 14th November. Ney, who throughout this long retreat brought up the rear, who distinguished himself amid its horrors by indomitable courage and constancy, and was hailed by the general voice as the hero of the army, remained behind until the 17th. On the 20th all were once more united at Oreza, after seven days of almost continued fighting, in which nothing but the sluggishness of the Russian general saved the French from destruction, and Napoleon from captivity or death. Opposed with fifteen thousand men, half starved and half armed, to a force treble that number, and in good condition, the Russians must have overthrown him by mere physical force, had they ventured upon a vigorous attack; but even in his distresses the presence of Napo-

leon inspired awe. At no time do the brilliant qualities of the French troops appear more conspicuous than in this disastrous retreat: headed on all sides, inclosed by an overwhelming force, every general outmanœuvred or cut his way through the enemy,* fortunate if it cost him but half of his corps to preserve the remainder from the disgrace of surrender. Between Smolensk and Oreza the army was still further reduced to twelve thousand men, who still preserved their arms and their discipline, encumbered with thirty thousand stragglers, who grievously increased its wants and its embarrassments, without adding a single bayonet to its strength.

Hitherto its retreat had been unopposed, the Russian army having been unwilling or unable to head the French and compel them to force a passage by the sword; and being in possession of Oreza, it passed the river Dnieper at that town without opposition. But Admiral Tchitchagoff, the general in command of the Moldavian army, which was opposed to the Austrians on the south-eastern end of the French base of operation, finding them slack and unenterprising in the cause of an ally, or master rather, to whom in truth they owed little good will, left merely a division in the duchy of Warsaw to observe their movements, and himself marched upon Minsk and Borizoff, to cut off Napoleon's retreat. At the latter town there was a bridge over the Beresina, the place itself being on the eastern bank, and on the possession of the town and command of the bridge depended the means of crossing that river. Tchitchagoff however, owing to some mistake of the French general opposed to him, had taken that town, and though afterwards expelled, had made the bridge impassable in his retreat. It was necessary, therefore, to seek a passage elsewhere, and a place above Borizoff, called Studzianka, was selected, where the river was only fifty-five fathoms across. The chance

* During the whole retreat only one corps grounded arms to the enemy, and that not until it was surrounded and cut off from the main army, and reduced to extremity. This occurred just before the passage of the Beresina.

seemed desperate, for the opposite heights were occupied by six thousand Russians, and bridges were to be built, and the army was to defile across them under their fire ; but desperate as it was, this seemed their only hope, and Napoleon quitting the highway plunged into the thick pine-woods which border the Beresina, to conceal his march. The joy of the army may well be imagined, when, in traversing these forests, they met the division of Victor, of fifty thousand men, in good order, which had been employed in checking Wittgenstein upon the western flank. "They were ignorant of our disasters, which had been carefully hidden even from their chiefs. So that when, instead of a grand victorious column returning from Moscow, they saw behind Napoleon nothing but a train of squalid spectres, covered with rags, with women's pelisses, pieces of carpet, or squalid cloaks scorched red and burnt into holes by the fires, their feet wrapped up in tatters of all sorts, they stopped in terror. They saw with affright these poor fleshless soldiers file past, with faces like the grave, bristled with ghastly beards, without arms, without shame, marching in disorder with downcast heads, eyes fixed on the earth, and silent like a troop of captives."* So contagious was this spectacle, that on the first day two corps of Victor's army fell into the same state of disorganization.

Among other attempts to deceive Tchitchagoff and make him believe that a passage would be attempted elsewhere, some Jews had been interrogated concerning the passes of the river ; and to secure the breach of their faith, they had been sworn to meet the army on the Beresina, below Borizoff, with intelligence of the enemy. The stratagem succeeded ; they carried a false report to the Admiral, and he and Napoleon turned their backs on each other, and while the latter marched up the river to Studzianka, the former marched down it to a ford at Oukoholda. All night the French laboured to construct a bridge, expecting momentarily the first salvo of the Russian artillery. Napoleon passed a restless and

* Segur, xi. 3

agitated night in a château near the river, continually repairing to the spot on which his last hope of escape rested. At morning, when all were prepared for a desperate and almost hopeless struggle, they were equally astonished and delighted to see the Russian watch-fires abandoned and the opposing force in full retreat. Napoleon would scarce believe the tidings, and when at last convinced by the evidence of his own eyes, he cried in transport, "Then I have outwitted the Admiral."*

That day, November 26th, two bridges were completed, and the opposite bank was occupied by Ney. Two days and two nights elapsed before the Russians came up, but this valuable respite was lost, owing to the breaking of the bridge for artillery, and the insubordination of the stragglers, which rendered it impossible to force them across. On the night of the 26th they were dispersed among the neighbouring villages; on the 27th men, horses, and carriages rushed in an overwhelming mass, and choked the narrow entrance of the bridges: all efforts to restore order were fruitless, and it was necessary to employ force to clear a passage for the Emperor. A corps of grenadiers of the Guard declined from mere pity to open for themselves a way through these wretches. On the approach of night another simultaneous movement drove them all to seek shelter in the village of Studzianka, which was torn down to furnish materials for fires, from which they could not be moved; and thus another night was lost.

On the 28th, while Tchitobagoff on the right bank in vain endeavoured to drive Ney back upon the bridges, Wittgenstein, with vastly superior forces, attacked Victor, who still remained on the left bank with 6000 men to cover the retreat of his unhappy comrades. The first thunder of the artillery drove this confused mass pell-mell from their bivouacs to the bridge, and the first Russian bullet which fell among them seemed the signal of dis-

* Segur, xi. 5.

traction and despair. The horrors of the scene which ensued are almost too great for description. The more desperate forced a way sword in hand through the crowd; others, prompted by a horrible avarice, crushed their fellow-creatures under their carriage-wheels, rather than abandon the booty hitherto preserved with such labour; while those who felt themselves unequal to the struggle sat apart in silence, their eyes fixed on the snow which was soon to be their tomb. Once driven from the direct passage, men struggled in vain to climb the sides of the bridge; they were mercilessly forced back into the river: even women, their infants in their arms, shared this fate.

In the midst of this disorder the bridge for artillery broke, and all upon it, hurried on by the press, were engulfed in the stream. The shriek of the perishing multitude rose high above the storm and the battle: a witness of the scene declared that for weeks that horrible sound never quitted his ears. Artillery and waggons then poured to the other bridge, and on the steep and icy bank whole ranks were prostrated under their wheels, or crushed between their unmanageable weights. The noise of the storm, the roaring of cannon, the combined whistling of the wind and bullets, the bursting of shells, the cries, the groans, the fearful imprecations of the crowd, united in as horrible a concert as ever was presented to human ears. At nine at night Victor, who till then had kept Wittgenstein in check, commenced his retreat, and opened a dreadful passage through the wretches whom he had hitherto defended. A rear-guard was still left, and the bridges were allowed to stand that night, but in vain; men seemed to lose their reason with their discipline, and to be stupified by the horrors of their situation. The baggage and plunder, to which they clung so obstinately, was burnt: still it was impossible to drive them on. The next morning the French set fire to the bridge, and numbers lost their lives in a final effort of despair, endeavouring to swim the icy river or to cross upon the burning rafters. After the thaw,

according to the Russian reports, 36,000 bodies were found in the Beresina.*

The French, having forced back and defeated Tchitchagoff, were now delivered from all immediate danger; and Napoleon, who had hitherto refused to quit the army, hastened to Paris, where internal affairs called for his presence, leaving Murat his successor in command. From this time forward the Russians, except Platoff and his Cossacks, desisted from the pursuit; but this alleviation of their misfortunes was fully compensated by other evils. A change had already taken place in the weather; the storms which had hitherto been experienced were succeeded by a still more dreadful calm. Icy needles were seen floating in the air; the very birds fell stiff and frozen, everything possessing life or motion seemed congealed by the intensity of cold.

“In this empire of death we passed on like unhappy spirits. The dull, uniform sound of our march, the crackling of the snow, the low groans of dying men, alone broke this mighty melancholy silence. There was no more anger, no more imprecations, nothing to indicate a trace of heat; strength scarce remained even for prayer, and the majority fell even without complaint, whether through weakness or resignation, or that men only complain when they hope to move, and believe that they are pitied.

* To get at the exact truth is no easy matter, even where the means of ascertaining it seem most ample. General Gourgaud, who also served in 1812, has published an elaborate criticism of the Comte de Segur's work, in which he maintains that the difficulties and losses of the passage of the Beresina have been excessively exaggerated,—that the French had 250 guns, which commanded the opposite bank, and 45,000 men under arms,—and that of women and children, whom Segur is always fond of introducing, there were next to none. Throughout the narrative we have followed Segur's account, as generally considered most authoritative, though he seems fond of writing for effect, and his accounts, as far as disparity of numbers in this latter part of the retreat is concerned, are somewhat startling.

“In fact, when for an instant they stopped through exhaustion, the winter laid her icy hand on them, and seized them as her prey. It was in vain then that, feeling themselves numbed, they arose, and speechless, stupified, advanced some paces like automatons: the blood freezing in their veins checked the beating of their hearts, and thence rushed to the head; then stricken by death, they staggered like drunken men. Real tears of blood dropped from their eyes, inflamed by the unvaried glare of snow, by want of sleep, and by the smoke of the bivouacs; deep sighs burst from their breasts; they looked to heaven, to us, and to the earth with a dismayed, fixed, and wild eye; it was their last adieu, perhaps a reproach to that savage nature which so tormented them. Soon they dropped, on their knees first, then on their hands; their heads wandered still some moments to right and left; a few sounds of agony escaped from the gasping mouth, which in its turn fell on the snow, and reddened it with livid blood, and their sufferings were over.

“Such were the last days of the grand army; its last nights were still more dreadful. When surprised by the dark at a distance from all dwellings, they stopped on the border of some wood; there they lighted fires, before which they spent the night, upright and immoveable as spectres. Unable to get enough of heat, they crowded so close to them, that their clothes and even frozen portions of their bodies were burnt. Then a horrible pain compelled them to enlarge their circle, and on the morrow they endeavoured in vain to rise.”*

We trace no further the details of suffering too great for human endurance. Sixty thousand men are computed to have crossed the Beresina. Loison, with 15,000, advanced from Wilna to meet and protect them; he lost 12,000 by three days of frost. Other reinforcements joined the retreat; yet of this total, amounting fully to 80,000 men, there recrossed the Niemen but 20,000 stragglers, nine cannon, and 1000 infantry and cavalry

under arms, and the merit of preserving this remnant belongs to Ney alone. Murat, to whom Napoleon at his departure intrusted the command-in-chief, and other marshals, had ceased to issue orders, or commanding, had ceased to be obeyed: Ney alone retained some influence and authority. Ever last in the retreat, with a rear-guard sometimes of twenty men, he opposed a bold front to his pursuers, and pre-eminently merited the title of "bravest of the brave," when the tried valour of others was changed into confusion and despair.

Scott's summary of the total loss in the campaign runs thus :—

Slain in battle	125,000
Died from fatigue, hunger, and the severity of the climate . . }	132,000
Prisoners, comprehending 48 generals, 3000 officers, and upwards of 190,000 soldiers }	193,000
	<hr/> 450,000



END OF VOL. I.



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